



James P. Conway, 1923-2010

As a trustee of the Irish American Archives Society, James Patrick Conway was instrumental in raising awareness of the group's goals and securing the financial support to help achieve these goals. Jim promoted the IAAS Life Membership program, in which donors give a \$1,000 gift to the organization, and he personally secured many of the early pledges. He generously gave of his time and talents to help the organization grow and become a prominent part of Northeast Ohio's Irish community.

Jim is credited with helping raise hundreds of millions of dollars for medical research and for the education of thousands of Greater Cleveland high school and college students.

A graduate of St. Ignatius High School, Jim served in World War II, retiring as a lieutenant colonel after 25 years in the Army Reserves. He graduated from John Carroll University in 1950, and later became the university's first lay alumni director. He established the President's Donor Club, Carroll Giving Sunday, Carroll Alumni newsletter and alumni chapters in other cities. In 2000, the university honored him with its prestigious Alumni Award.

In 1963, he became the first man hired by Ursuline College, where he established a development program that raised \$6.5 million for construction of the college's present campus in Pepper Pike. He served five years as president of Cleveland Catholic Charities Services Corp. and was a trustee of Borromeo College and St. Mary's Seminary.

In 1969, Case Western Reserve University recruited Jim to help raise funds for the university. He was able to use his law degree from Cleveland-Marshall College of Law to develop a program that made major contributions to the university an integral part of estate planning. When Jim joined the university in 1972, its endowment was \$78 million. Twenty-five years later, with his help, the endowment reached \$1.5 billion, one of only 16 U.S. universities at the time to have an endowment surpassing \$1 billion. For many years, his car license plate was "ENDOW" reflecting his enthusiasm for his job. He retired as assistant to the president of CWRU in 2004 but continued helping the university raise funds.

When Regina High School in South Euclid was slated for closing, Jim spearheaded a drive to raise \$500,000 to keep the school in operation until falling enrollment forced its closing in spring 2011.

In August 2010, Jim and his wife, Katie, took their six children, their spouses and nine grandchildren on a two-week trip to Ireland, where they visited Ballycroy in County Mayo, the birthplace of Jim's parents. On his return flight to Cleveland, he suffered shortness of breath and was later diagnosed with Stage IV non-smoking lung cancer. He died September 10th at his Shaker Heights home at the age of 86.

Jim always gave much of the credit for his fundraising success to the people who provided the link in helping him seek donations from their peers. "People give money to people" he said. Jim's contributions to education and to the IAAS will leave a lasting imprint. His leadership, enthusiasm and encouragement will be sorely missed not only by his family and friends but by many in the community as well.

By John P. Coyne, IAAS Trustee