



# THE IRISH SOCIETY NEWS

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FEBRUARY 2019



The Irish Society  
[www.TheIrishSociety.org](http://www.TheIrishSociety.org)  
P.O. Box 980334  
Houston, Texas 77098

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**VICE PRESIDENT**

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JOHN B. KANE

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**IN MEMORIAM**

ANN C. IVINS

MADLINE O'BRIEN

DOROTHY DAVITT

GLENN MCCARTHY, JR.

## 2019 CELEBRATION DINNER - SATURDAY, MARCH 9

The Irish Society is Honoring all of Our **Founding Members** at the **2019 Celebration Dinner**. We are celebrating the **20 Year Anniversary** of the Irish Society's inception. On October 15, 1999, 21 people gathered in Pat Sharkey's office and created The Irish Society. We are grateful to our founding members in that we have a Society where we can share our Irish Heritage and Culture with so many. We look forward to many more great years of Celebrating!

The 2019 St. Patrick's Celebration Dinner will be held on Saturday, March 9, 2019 at 6:30pm at the Petroleum Club. We look forward to celebrating this magnificent milestone with all our members, family and friends. Contact **Gregory Horan** at [gfhoran@hotmail.com](mailto:gfhoran@hotmail.com) or call 713-459-4559 for tickets.

### Founding Members of the Irish Society:

Mike Daly, +Dorothy Davitt, Judge Dan Downey, +Mary Lou Doyle, +Paul Doyle, Mary Jo Clancy Faykus, Eamonn Finnerty, Delia Fitzpatrick, Michael P. Fleming, Rev. Charles Greene, Col. Michael H. Harrington (USMC, ret.), +Ann Caraway Ivins, Hon. John Kane, +Jeannie Kearns, +Mary Barden Keegan, +Dr. Jim Keegan, +Glenn McCarthy, Jr., Leah McCarthy McCurry, +Madeline O'Brien, Dr. Joseph McFadden, Patrick T. Sharkey. (+ denotes deceased).

## IRISH SOCIETY MAILING ADDRESS

The Houston Irish Society has a New Mailing Address:

**The Irish Society of Houston**  
**P. O. Box 980334**  
**Houston, Texas 77098**

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As we turn the calendar to 2019 and start a new year, it is fitting that we take a quick look at the past, the present and the future of The Irish Society.

**The Past** On October 15, 1999, at John Kane's request, I hosted a meeting of 20 esteemed Irish individuals in my law firm's office at 1100 Louisiana. At that meeting, Houston's Irish community collectively agreed to incorporate an "umbrella" organization which would (i) embrace all Irish individuals in Houston and (ii) honor and promote Irish culture in Houston, Texas. Two weeks later, October 29, 1999, the Articles of Incorporation of The Irish Society, Inc., a Texas non-profit corporation, were filed in, and accepted by, the Texas Secretary of State's Office. In addition to consolidating Houston's Irish community, The Irish Society also focused on creating a Center for Irish Studies which would showcase Irish culture, music, literature and history. Under the inspired leadership of Lori Gallagher, The William J. Flynn Center for Irish Studies at The University of St. Thomas has attained national recognition as a leading Center for Irish Studies. All members of The Irish Society should take pride in being an integral part of operational success of The William J. Flynn Center for Irish Studies.

**The Present** Given that this October marks the **20th Year Anniversary** of The Irish Society, Gregory Horan, the Chair of the annual St. Patrick's Celebration Dinner, will honor the surviving founders and pay tribute to the deceased founding members of The Irish Society as the Honorees at the 2019 St. Patrick's Celebration Dinner on **Saturday, March 9, 2019**. This is an extraordinary opportunity for all members of The Irish Society to register for this year's Celebration Dinner and salute and thank the founders of The Irish Society. It will be a memorable night for The Irish Society, and I hope you will honor us with your enthusiastic presence.

**The Future** Although the 20 years since the founding of The Irish Society have passed quickly, the reality is that it is time to pass the baton of leadership to the next generation of Houston's Irish community. At the November 2018 Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors, I announced that 2019 will be my final year to have the privilege of being President of this outstanding Irish organization. I have enjoyed my tenure as President, and I thank all the Directors, Officers and Members who have actively supported The Irish Society over the last 19+ years. It is time to address the future with a fresh leader. I will always be a part of The Irish Society. I hope the next 20 years are as productive as the first 20 years. I look forward to seeing all of you at the Celebration Dinner on March 9, 2019. Slainte!

## ANN O'ROURKE - REST IN PEACE



Ann Duggan O'Rourke (1930-2018) was born in Houston on March 1, 1930 to the late Mercedes Romero Duggan and Benjamin Hardy Duggan.

Ann attended St. Agnes Academy, Lamar High School and graduated from the University of Houston. After college, she worked several years at Tennessee Oil & Gas Company. She was a dedicated and loving wife to Burke O'Rourke (great Irishman), mother, grandmother, daughter, sister, friend. Ann was a devout Catholic who truly lived her faith. Ann was kind, generous, unselfish and loved by many. She will be truly missed. She was a dedicated member of the Irish Society. Her son, Joe O'Rourke, is a board member of the IS. Ann always had a smile to share.

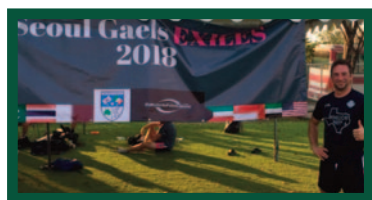
## ZIOMEK'S EPIC JOURNEY AROUND THE WORLD



Late last year, I had the tremendous opportunity to head back to Asia and play with my old Gaelic football club, the Seoul Gaels, in the Fexco Asian Gaelic Games.

I was raised around the city in NY and Northern NJ. Two weeks after 9-11, I left NY for a job opportunity in Seoul, South Korea. While doing this, I met many Irish people who were all in their mid twenties. They had started a Gaelic football team and I joined the team. We went to Hong Kong and beat everyone to win the Derek Brady Cup, the best team in all of Asia! Then I moved to Los Angeles and joined a club there, The Wild Geese. Six years later, I moved to Houston and I was able to get a club going and with tremendous help from others, we founded the **Houston Gaels** in late 2011.

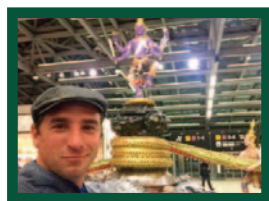
As the Houston Gaels now head into our eighth year of existence and now my seventeenth involved with the GAA, I was invited to go back and play for my old club in the 2018 Asian Gaelic Championships. And with permission from my wife, I headed off to Bangkok.



From the time I left my house to the time I got to the hotel in Bangkok, it was just over thirty hours of travel. Once we arrived and caught up with old friends, it was a late night/early morning. We played two full days of matches and were quite successful. We celebrated our time together and the fact that our friendships made on sandy pitches in Seoul in the early 2000s were now

being rekindled on the soggy sod of Bangkok all these years later. Our mid twenties have turned to our early forties yet the fun and competitive nature never left. After a James Bond themed gala that Sunday night, I left for the airport at 10pm. My flight was just after midnight. I was on the ground for a grand total of seventy-two hours! Travel time back to Houston was a bit shorter this time, twenty-six hours. To and from went through Tokyo, Narita and I landed in Houston at 7:30 Monday morning and went straight to work!

The GAA has been a huge part of my adult life. I was fortunate enough to meet my wife through it. Most of my friends here in Texas have come through the GAA. It has also really helped me to explore



my family's Irish heritage. We have grown our club into two mens teams, a ladies team, and have plans to build a youth program as well as a hurling team. We'd love to have more of the community members involved. if you or your children or friends would like to come out and play, we would love to have you! Find us online at [HoustonGaels.com](http://HoustonGaels.com), Facebook @HoustonGaels, or email [HoustonGaels@gmail.com](mailto:HoustonGaels@gmail.com).

## JOHN LUKE 'JACK' MCCONN, JR. - REST IN PEACE

He was born June 14, 1923 to Ethel Elizabeth Trinkhaus and John Luke McConn, Sr. In 1939 relocated to Houston where he remained until his passing. Jack was a 1942 graduate of St. Thomas High School in Houston. Jack was introduced to the love of his life Mary Catherine (Katie) Burke by her brother Eddie. They were married on the 26th December 1947, at St Anne's Catholic Church. He became a lawyer and formed his own law firm in 1986. Jack and Katie lived in Houston throughout their marriage where they raised their five children. John Luke McConn, Jr. was a Life-Time Member of the Irish Society.



## UPCOMING IRISH EVENTS

### February 9, 2019 Rory Miggins Memorial Irish Music Festival & Stew Cook-off

Samples from Cooks, Music on inside and outside stages, Dancers, Bagpipers, Face Painters, vendors, World-Famous Billy Carr Stout Relay and More! Saturday, February 9th, 2019 - 11:00am to 6:00pm, Awards and Raffle begin at 5:15pm - RAIN or Shine! 801 St. Emanuel Street, Houston, TX 77003, \$10 Donation at the door, Children under 12 are free.

Bands: Celtic Chorus of Houston, Pratty (joining us from Dallas!), Dead Rabbits, Mongo Cross Band, Godfrey's Rangers, Anika Chambers (nominated in the 2019 Blues Music Awards category for Soul Blues Female Artist of the Year!)

**March 9, 2019 St. Patrick's Celebration Dinner** will be held on Saturday, March 9, 2019 at 6:30pm at the Petroleum Club. We are honoring all Founding Members of the IS and celebrating the 20 Year Anniversary of the Irish Society's Inception. Contact **Gregory Horan** at [gghoran@hotmail.com](mailto:gghoran@hotmail.com) or call 713-459-4559 for tickets.

### March 16, 2019 Houston St. Patrick's Day Parade

Noon Start. Come out and March with The Irish Society! Go to [HSPPC.com](http://HSPPC.com) for more information. A new marching route will be announced at the Irish Stew Cook-Off as well as the Grand Marshal! Be Irish!...Be There!



## Happy St. Patrick's Day!



May the road rise up to meet you.  
 May the wind be always at your back.  
 May the sun shine warm upon your face;  
 the rains fall soft upon your fields  
 and until we meet again,  
 may God hold you in the palm of His hand.



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