

Boston Irish HONORS

11TH ANNUAL LUNCHEON

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2021
Seaport Boston Hotel
Boston, Massachusetts

2021 Boston Irish Honorees



Mary Sugrue



Joseph R. Nolan Jr.

Marking a special anniversary of this celebratory luncheon, **Boston Irish Honors** recognizes the leadership and accomplishments of individuals and families of Irish descent who exemplify the very best of our values, legacies and traditions.

Welcome to the 11th Annual Boston Irish Honors



Boston Irish, founded in 1990 as the Boston Irish Reporter, is part of a family-owned news organization led by Ed Forry, Bill Forry, and Maureen Forry-Sorrell, with roots in both Dorchester and Ireland.

In keeping with the Forry family's heritage, Boston Irish tells the stories of exemplary Irish and Irish American families and individuals who share our common roots in Boston and Ireland. Boston Irish Honors debuted in 2010 and has become an annual highlight on the fall calendar, with an appreciative audience of more than 300 Boston business, civic, neighborhood, and political leaders in recognition of Boston's Irish heritage.

The event, in support of Boston and New England's own hometown Irish American magazine and website, affords recognition for achievements

in public service, business, and community leadership.

Join us at this inspiring event, as we celebrate exemplary individuals & families who share our culture and traditions - as we tell the stories of their special achievements in public service, business, philanthropy, and community leadership.

In 2010, when we first gathered with some friends and advisors to develop plans to host an annual luncheon featuring stories drawn from Boston's large Irish community, we had a central idea in mind: We sought to honor remarkable people and families in our community who truly exemplify the best qualities of the Boston Irish.

In telling their stories, which speak to our heritage both here and Ireland, we seek to reaffirm our immigrant roots and recall with gratitude the men and women who came here and made Boston our home.

Boston is an exceptional city because of the diverse cultures that have joined together to make it their home. It's a team effort. But we believe that it is important for those with roots in Ireland to celebrate our own stories and pass forward the tales of exemplary families for the benefit of our children, ourselves, and future generations.

We host our annual event not just to present awards, but also to give public recognition to exemplary persons and families and honor them for the examples they give to our city. That is Boston Irish Honors.

There was no luncheon in 2020 due to the public health emergency. But, we are thrilled to welcome back friends old and new to an in-person event—with appropriate precautions in place—this year. And we're excited to welcome two wonderful people — Joe Nolan and Mary Sugrue—to the roster of honorees who have shared their family stories with us over the last decade.

- The Forrys

Boston Irish Honorees

Jim Carmody

Kathy & John Drew

Grace Cotter Regan

2018

Rev. Richard "Doc" Conway

Mary and Bob Scannell

Dr. Trevor McGill, MD

2017

Nora, Annmarie & Bill Kennedy

Tom Tinlin

Kevin Cullen

2016

Jim & Mary (Cahill) Judge

Senator Paul G. Kirk Jr.

Kevin & Joe Leary & Family

2015

Margaret Stapleton

Mike Sheehan

BPD Commissioner William Evans
& Family

2014

Katherine Craven

Boston Mayor Marty Walsh

The Burke Family of South Boston



Ed and Bill Forry.

2013

Therese Murray

Gerry & Bob Mulligan & Family

John P. Driscoll Jr. (Posthumous)

2012

Congressman Richard Neal

Brendan & Greg Feeney

Mary & Bob Muse & Family

2011

Kathleen O'Toole

State Senator Tom Kennedy

Joseph Corcoran Family

James Hunt Jr. Family

Tom Mulvoy Family

2010

Hon. Ed Markey

John Donohue

Peg Geraghty & Family

Jim Brett & Family

Mayor John B. Hynes Family

Today's Program

Boston Irish 31st Anniversary

Welcome and Introductions

Mary & Jim Judge, Event Co-Chairs

Tom Tinlin, Master of Ceremonies

Blessing and Invocation

Rev. Tom Kennedy

Custom Luncheon

Pre-Set on Table: Mixed Baby, Caramelized Butternut Squash,
Cinnamon Croutons, Maple Walnut Dressing

Entree: Roasted Chicken Breast, Colcannon Potatoes,
Kerrygold Buttered Carrots

Vegetarian O[ption Upon Request]

Dessert: Seaport Cheesecake, Sugared Strawberries,
Fresh Whipped Cream

Presentation of Honors

Mary Sugrue - Native of Cahersiveen, County Kerry, Ireland

Joseph R Nolan Jr - Native of Brighton Massachusetts, USA

Acknowledgements

We extend our warm thanks to Nancy Coan, World Trade Center/Seaport Hotel; Dusty Rhodes and her professional event staff including Rachael Patten at Conventures; Bill Brett, world class photographer; and Margaret Brett Hastings and Ireland on the Move's Tom Clifford, for their still and video images that is making a record of today's event; and the chef, cooks, wait staff and support staff who serve us so well today. And to all our sponsors, event committee members and guests at today's luncheon, **go raibh maith agat- Thank you!**

Dick Flavin

John P Foley

Bill Forry

Hon. Linda Dorcena Forry

Maureen Forry-Sorrell

Anne Geraghty

Jim Hunt III

William Kennedy

Rev. Thomas B. Kennedy

Paul LaCamera

Mimi LaCamera

Joe Leary

Mary Ellen Mulligan

John O'Hara

Catherine O'Neill

Grace Cotter Regan

Bill Reilly

Michael Sheehan

Robert Sheridan

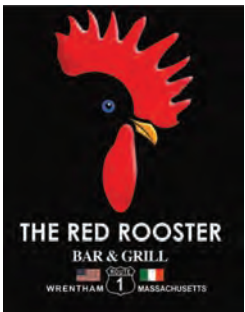
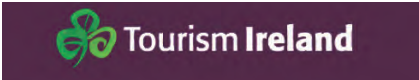
Tom Tinlin

W. Paul White



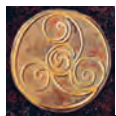
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Boston College High School, Curry College, Irish Cultural Center of New England, Irish Networking Boston, JLL, Kirk & Associates, Inc., Lloyd-O'Sullivan Wealth Management, National Grid, Synergy Investments.



The Boston Irish Honors 2021 for Business and Philanthropy

Joe Nolan: A man of family and faith ... and an on-the-go CEO at Eversource Energy



It was all smiles for Team Nolan of Belmont when Claudia graduated from Newton Country Day School. From left, Olivia, a delighted Mom Therese, Claudia, a proud Dad Joe, Hannah, and Isabelle.
All photos in this segment are courtesy of the Nolan family

By TOM MULVOY

Come June 1985, Joseph R. Nolan Jr., his bachelor's in communications from Boston College in hand, was ready and eager to take on the world, or at least part of it, the private sector in the United States. "All I wanted to do was public relations," he noted thirty-six years later in an interview. "I thought I'd be good at that. I had three offers to look at after graduation: A position with Gallo Wine selling for them in California; I had an opportunity to join Lever Brothers and peddle detergent for them in southeastern Massachusetts; and I had an interview scheduled with Boston Edison for a slot in customer service at their Boston headquarters. I asked them about a public relations position, but I couldn't get in to see the guy in that office."

As things turned out, Joe's namesake father, then a justice on the state's Supreme Judicial Court, was a law school pal of an Edison executive, a relationship that helped young Joe get the interview and then a job that he wasn't specifically looking for with one of the region's dominant utilities.

As to his PR dreams, Joe Nolan, Jr. doesn't quit easily. From accepting checks with small amounts and discussing billing issues with Edison customers in 1985, he rose to senior roles, often via positions keyed to public relations, as Boston Edison became NStar and, in 2012, merged with Northeast Utilities and associated companies to become Eversource Energy.

Last April, he was named the CEO of Eversource, a \$30 billion corporation with 9,300 employees that services 4.3 million customers with electricity, gas,

and water utilities in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Hampshire. Last year, the company posted operating revenues of \$8.9 billion.

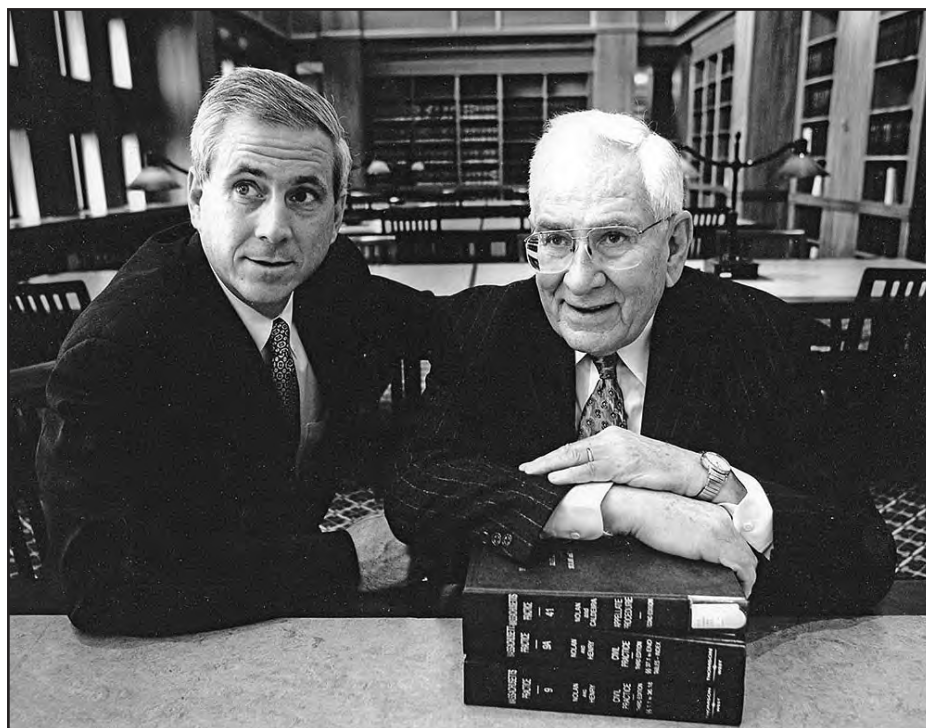
After the announcement, the 58-year-old Nolan said he was excited about continuing his CEO predecessor Jim Judge's long-term vision for a carbon-neutral future, with a focus on renewable sources of electricity, energy efficiency, and smarter grid systems, a future that might also include a shift to hydrogen from the natural gas fuel currently used to heat homes.

"Everyone thinks this business is

a sleepy business," Nolan said in an interview. "It's not. The innovation that's taking place in this business is going at warp speed."

The Nolans of Belmont

Joseph R. Nolan Sr. (1925-2017) grew up in Mattapan with an older brother. His father was a school custodian, his mother a house cleaner. Going back a generation, the family's ties to the 'old country' centered in part on Rassaraun in Co. Mayo, where McNamara and Flynn ancestors tilled the land in the late 1880s.



Joseph R. Nolan, Jr., and his dad, Joseph R. Nolan, Sr., an eminent jurist who sat for many years on the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, share a quiet moment in one of the justice's favored places, a law library.

A "Triple Eagle" in local parlance – graduation from Boston College High School (1942), Boston College (1950), and Boston College Law School (1954) – Joe Senior served as a pharmacist's mate in the US Navy in the Pacific during World War II. After passing the bar a decade or so later, he spent his adult lifetime in the practice of law, as an assistant district attorney, as a private lawyer, and as a judge in Massachusetts – Brighton District Court, Suffolk Superior Court, the State Appeals Court, and, from 1981 to 1995, the Supreme Judicial Court.

While all that was going on, he found the time to court (via trolley lines out of Mattapan) and marry Margaret (Peggy) Kelly of Brighton, where the newlyweds set up house and got right to work producing their family, a grouping of seven that their father called his "jewels" – Leonard, now a wealth manager; Barbara, a real estate broker in the family tradition; Maura Brown, an entrepreneur; Martina, a CPA; Jacqueline Nolan-Haley, a professor of law at Fordham University; Janice Henry, a teacher; and Joseph the CEO.

Asking the youngest gem about family life in Nolan household when the judge and Peggy the mom were on the domestic bench is to guarantee an extended riff from Joe the younger that is rich with energy and appreciation in the telling:

"My father and my mother were always working, he until close to his death four years ago, and she well into her eighties with her real estate business. He was forever on the move in working mode so that, for one thing,

(Continued next page)



The Boston Irish Honors 2021

we wouldn't have to take out college loans. He paid for everything and to do that he for a long time worked three jobs while getting up at four o'clock every morning. He'd sit on the bench in the morning, then head over to Suffolk Law School later in the day to teach. He also made time to write regularly for West Publishing and also to go out to Worcester where he conducted the Nolan Bar Review for aspiring lawyers.

"I recall his work updating Black's Law Dictionary as being family time on the side. One of the fun activities we used to do was gather around the dining room table with him and collate and put into binders the parts of books and reports and publications that he was going to use in teaching his students.

"As to the activities that we would do, we always moved as a family. My parents would never go off on vacation by themselves. We all went together. As the youngest, I got the odd jobs. When my Mom was showing real estate, I would from an early age get in the car with her as she drove to the properties for sale, run up the stairs, and open up all the shades and turn on all the lights to make the rooms look bigger.

"I have to tell you one other story. Paul Sutliff was a blind man who used to run the coffee shop at the State House. He and his wife Regina and their children lived four doors away from us and Paul and Regina were my parents' close friends. When they died and as their kids were cleaning out the estate before the closing, which my father had worked on, they got the bill from him for his services - for two hot-fudge sundaes at the Brigham's in Brighton center. That was so much like him."

Beyond modeling the value of work as a virtue on its own, the judge and Peggy engendered in their seven children a clear sense that their Catholicism should always be an animating factor in their lives. Some fifty and sixty years ago, many Catholics in Boston and elsewhere included a nod to their faith in their everyday lives by going to early Mass and taking communion before heading to work, to school, or back home. Beginning with their mother and father, this was a daily reality for the Nolan family wherever they lived, a reality that their children continue to embrace in 2021, the youngest sibling reports.

Joe talks with pride and affection about how he and his siblings have kept their father's faith in the need to keep the family close. "I have five sisters and one brother. Three of them are what you might call intellectual types and the other three operate on the entrepreneurial side of things. All of them are very skilled at what they do. So, I'm very fortunate to have such a nice balance with them. We are extremely close. My sisters and their families all go down to Scituate for the summer while my brother and I go to the Cape. A good number of us lived in Belmont until recently, so it was easy, and it still is so, to get together.

Joe and Therese Team Up

Joe attended Our Lady of the Presenta-

tion Grammar School in Brighton before his father, having taken a seat on the Brighton District Court bench, moved the family to what Joe impishly calls the "hardscrabble streets of Belmont," where he attended high school as did a young woman named Therese DiGiovanni,, who was a year behind him.

"I tried to get her attention beginning in 1978, but she wouldn't agree to go out with me," said Joe. "Life went on, and in 1987, when I was working for the Edison store in downtown Framingham and she was at Framingham State, I reached out to her beloved father Charlie and got her phone number and address and paid her a visit in my Edison Chevy Chevette. Must have made quite an impression with that whip! Still, I finally wore her down, and after a chase of 13 years, we were married in 1991.

"For the real hard work, Therese raised our children - Olivia, who is 29 and is working in real estate in New York and running a big portfolio down there; Hannah, our second is, at 27, working as a physician's assistant at Brigham and Women's; Isabelle, now 24 and working on her master's in school counseling at BC; and Claudia 19, who's in college at the Jesuits' Fordham University in the Bronx."

"She has earned some rest and relaxation, and we are enjoying sharing time - we got out to golf at Woodland the other afternoon. She is very outgoing and loves outdoor sports - she still holds the record in the 50-yard dash at Belmont High. She golfs, takes walks, and does some kickboxing; yes, she likes kickboxing. She is great, and just what I need to keep myself tethered."

For his continuing work, Joe carries on with the many outside interests that CEOs are expected to take on, often on boards that tend to involve non-profit organizations. There is Camp Harbor View, an initiative of the late Boston Mayor Tom Menino and businessman Jack Connors that, in its own words, works to expose the city's underserved youth to the possibilities of a future they may have never envisioned. The centerpiece of what is now a year-round program is summertime activities while camping on Long Island in Boston Harbor.

Joe also serves on the Chairman's Council at Boston Children's Hospital, and on the boards of the New England Council, the Sancta Maria Skilled Nursing Facility, and the Francis Ouimet (nee Caddie) Scholarship Fund, among others.

About Final Things

On the day last April when he was to be named the CEO at Eversource, Joe got up a bit earlier than usual and drove from Belmont to Dorchester and St. Gregory's Church, where his friend, the Rev. Jack Ahern, said the 6:45 Mass as a sort of spiritual boost for him on that special day.

"That was touching, and appreciated," said Joe, who wears his Catholicism fully with a deep confidence that the faith that his parents bequeathed to him and his siblings has meaning in everything



The family that prays together, stays together, they say. In this instance, it was Joseph Nolan Sr, his wife, Peggy, and their children in the town of Lourdes in southwestern France where the Virgin Mary was said to have appeared to a local woman in 1858. Back row: Peggy, Janice, Leonard, Barbara, Jacqueline, and Father Joe. Middle: Maura, and Martina. In front: Joe Jr. Below, the youngest Nolan, stepped out on his own and grimaced for the camera.



they do, publicly and privately. Given that, he has taken their lead in planning for the time when he will be facing his final days.

"I will tell you," he said to his interviewer, "what I always tell my

kids: 'Listen, when I am dying, I won't be caring about having doctors and big shots coming in to see me; just send in the priests; that's all I want. I have a Rolodex full of their names, and that should help you.'



Joe Nolan In Profile – As Others See Him

I have known Joe Nolan for over 30 years. While I am proud to have grown up in Dorchester, Joe always like to tell me that he was raised on the “rugged streets” of Belmont! Joe is really one of a kind and I know a lot of folks would say... Thank God! He has the rare ability to engage people, such that each one feels that they are his best friend or closest confidant. It happens because he puts in the time, reaching out regularly to sustain those many friendships.

“A number of years ago, I was dealing with a darkened vacant property in the inner city of Boston. It was a hotspot of criminal activity affecting the safety and well-being of concerned neighbors. It was then that Jim Brett told me the go-to guy in Boston was Joe Nolan. I called Joe, lighting was restored, our neighborhood was safer and the neighbors most grateful.

Rev. Jack Ahern
Pastor, St. Gregory Parish
Dorchester

“Joe Nolan is a man with passion! Passion for his faith, as a daily communicant. Passion for his family as a loving husband, father, and brother. And passion for customer service, which is so critical in his new role as CEO of Eversource.

Jim Judge
Executive Chairman,
Eversource Energy

Joe Nolan has long been a champion of the vulnerable and helping those in need. For more than 25 years, he has been an unheralded and tireless supporter of Whittier Street Health Center’s mission to achieve health equity and social justice, and to address the economic well-being of our diverse and at-risk patient population. “Joe is loyal, kind, dependable, and charitable, and he brings the same level of compassionate generosity and empathy to all his interactions. He is guided by his faith and love for humanity, going above and beyond the call of duty to help those who would otherwise be considered the least, lost, and last! I am thankful for all he does for our community and I am proud to call him my friend.

Frederica M. Williams
President & CEO
Whittier Street Health Center

Joe’s first job after graduating from Boston College was at my agency, Hill Holliday. It became clear very quickly that he was destined for greatness and after a year at Hill Holliday he realized that becoming the CEO there would not fulfill his definition of greatness, so he moved on to a wonderful opportunity at the Boston Edison. “Just like the old Sara Lee slogan.. “Nobody doesn’t like Sara Lee,” nobody doesn’t like Joe Nolan. He was often underestimated, but to the surprise of no one who knows him well, he was named the successor to Jim Judge as the CEO of the largest utility in the Northeast. You can’t be the CEO of such an organization and not be curious about new sources of energy. Joe has become knowledgeable about each of them and, as a result, nobody knows more about wind and a number of others than Joe.

Jack Connors
Civic Activist, Philanthropist,
Retired CEO, Hill Holliday

Obviously, Joe is a highly competent business executive, but what sets him apart are his senses of humanity and humor. He cares about other people deeply and he’s genuinely funny. He sees the best in the world.

There’s so much about Joe that’s pure Irish. He’s a terrific storyteller; he’s got a wicked sense of humor and a quick wit; and he has a deep sense of community and understands his obligation to give back.

Mike Sheehan
Former CEO of
Hill Holliday and
President, the Boston Globe

Not only is Joe Nolan an exceptional executive, but he also dedicates and volunteers his time and talent with so many organizations and causes. There are too many to name, but a common thread runs throughout all his efforts... the importance of serving others. I believe his drive to service is a result of his education with the Jesuits, who teach young students to be “Men for Others.” I have met hundreds of CEOs, but Joe Nolan is one in a million.

James T. Brett
President and CEO
The New England Council

Those of us who have the pleasure of calling Joe Nolan a colleague and friend understand why he is so richly deserving of this honor.

The qualities that make him the person we love and admire— his wit and wisdom, faith and loyalty, and keen, clear-eyed judgment— all have roots in his Irish heritage and he’s proud of that — as he should be. But I think Joe’s even prouder still of the people from all walks of life to whom he’s become a mentor, role model, and confidant. Everyone in this room has a story of how Joe helped them or someone they know. We are lucky to have him!

Linda Dorcena Forry
Former State Legislator,
Suffolk Construction Executive

Frederica M. Williams and Linda Dorcena Forry are members of the Board of Directors at Eversource Energy.

THROUGH THE YEARS WITH THE BUDDING CEO

Joe Nolan the younger was no shrinking violet, family members and friends have been heard to say. Whether it was sitting in repose in a law office setting, or playing a ragtime tune on the piano, or pretending to drive a golf car, he was always on the move as a youngster. Still, later in life he has always treasured family time without rushing the relaxation, as in this photo of a Cape Cod moment with Therese, Claudia, Olivia, Hannah, and Isabelle.





The Boston Irish Honors 2021 for Community Service and Philanthropy

Cahersiveen's gift to a changing Ireland

Mary Sugrue champions the Irish American Partnership's mission

By CHRIS LOVETT

A search for Mary Sugrue on a web platform for networking conjures up a picture of her in front of a background image of the Skellig Islands jutting like saw teeth through the waters of the Atlantic to the west of County Kerry. Settled by monks in the sixth century CE, the Skelligs are a seat of learning and tradition, a sanctuary for seabirds, and a magnet for tourists.

Less than eight miles from Kerry's Iveragh Peninsula, the site marks a frontier between the local and the inaccessible, or a portal between worlds. As displayed on *LinkedIn*, it's also the centerpiece of a calling card for Mary Sugrue and her role as CEO of the Irish American Partnership in Boston.

The second oldest of six children, Mary was born in one of the peninsula's westernmost towns, Cahersiveen. From the start, the family straddled a frontier between tradition and economic change. Her parents, Paddy and Tess, moved back to Ireland in the 1960s from Chicago, where her father had a job maintaining city buildings. As the oldest son of aging parents, with no siblings in Ireland, it was up to him to extend the family's foothold. "It was poor, yet it was their land" Mary explained. "And so that was important to them."

In a departure from tradition, the farmhouse also functioned as a bed and breakfast, one of the first to serve increasing numbers of tourists flocking to the Ring of Kerry. For Mary and her siblings, home life doubled as seasonal work in the hospitality sector. That meant helping with meals, making beds, and greeting the guests, even crossing the line between accommodations and atmosphere.

"One of the other things we had to do was actually perform Irish dancing and sing a song for the tourists," she recalled. "And we gave my mother such heartache because, you know, we'd say, 'Do we have to do that?'"

In exchange for providing a taste of the "Irish experience," she received something in return: the value of meeting people, learning their stories, and about the connections that brought them to Ireland. It was a job skill she would later use in her work for the Irish American Partnership (IAP).

Even while she was growing up, Sugrue and her parents were looking beyond the local tourist economy. Though she said they were not formally educated, she described them as avid readers who influenced her decision to become a teacher. Other influencers were a "nurturing" fourth grade teacher and a high school geography teacher who Sugrue said "really opened up the world."

"I wanted to see it all, you know, so that's why I ended up traveling after," she said. "But he definitely made it seem



On the Road for the Partnership

Above, Mary Sugrue tells the story of the IAP's mission at an Irish Invitational Golf Tournament in Killarney. Below, she joined students and staff at the Cliftonville Integrated Primary School in Belfast while on a leadership mission in 2018.

All photos in this segment are courtesy of the Sugrue family and the IAP



there was such a big world outside of our little lovely town."

In 1979, after high school and a visit to the youth mass celebrated in Galway by Pope John Paul II, Sugrue headed to Dublin for training as a primary school teacher at Carysfort College. Even then, she knew there was no turning back. "At the time I just knew that once I left school, I was going to college, and who knows where I would end up," she said. "But I was certainly never considering that I would end up in Kerry. If I did, I'd be a small minority from my class."

Sugrue's time in college overlapped

with pivotal years of the conflict in Northern Ireland. The period was marked by extremist hostilities, but also by exponents of non-violence and economic uplift, most notably Nobel Laureates John Hume and Betty Williams and Mairead Corrigan Maguire, leaders of the "Peace People." There were more initiatives in the United States, including a committee to spur investment in Northern Ireland, as well as a trade partnership between Boston and Derry, forged by Hume and former Boston Mayor Ray Flynn. Even more important were the Congressional

Friends or Ireland, brought together in 1981 by Speaker Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill, and Senators Ted Kennedy and Daniel Moynihan. In paving the way toward the advance for the peace process in the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, the engagement of US leaders would be critical.

A similar mission applies to the 35-year-old Irish American Partnership and its focus on education and community development projects in Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic. Under its first president and CEO, Joseph F. Leary, Jr., the IAP opened an office in Boston in 1988.

It was personal connection that helped Mary land a job with the Partnership. Teaching for three years at an inner-city school in Dublin had opened her eyes to what she called "a different world." Still influenced by "wanting to see more," she explained, she took a career break, which also coincided with the larger "brain drain" of educated people faced with a shortage of opportunities in Ireland.

Her travels included a year in Australia and stops at multiple American cities, including Boston. When she came back to the Boston area, she looked up a friend from college, Mary Conroy Henderson. Currently a realtor in communities southwest of Boston, Henderson has long had ties to the Partnership, appearing at its functions to sing the national anthems of Ireland and the United States for more than thirty years. When Leary offered her an administrative job, Henderson declined but put in a word for her friend Mary, who got the job.

When Sugrue went to work as an executive secretary with the Partnership in 1989, one of her first tasks was to get a desk and typewriter for its new office in Faneuil Hall. She also had to deliver a letter to the mayor's office that invited Ray Flynn to the Partnership's opening ceremony. She eventually became the Partnership's main fundraiser, refining her bed-and-breakfast skills to become the consummate listener and the convenor who organized gatherings — from business breakfasts to roundtables and golf tournaments — on both sides of the Atlantic. During her years with the Partnership, the program has raised more than \$32 million.

"I was meeting the supporters, and that's what I loved," she said. "I loved hearing their stories and their family stories of their own ancestors. I loved hearing how much they loved and appreciated Ireland."

Currently the Partnership's President Emeritus, Leary notes that "supporters throughout the country respect Mary for her truthfulness and non-exaggeration of the Partnership's accomplishments. Mary Sugrue is truly an Irish Star in Boston."

(Continued on page 9)



FAMILY PICTURES



Above, Mary's parents, Tess and Paddy Sugrue, in Cahersiveen on far west coast of Ireland. Middle, the family homestead in Cahersiveen on the Iveragh Peninsula in Co. Mayo. Below, young Mary with her grandmother, Johanna (Guerin) Sugrue.



The Irish American Partnership: A key investor in Ireland's young

Mary Sugrue has long known of the challenges facing Ireland's youth because she experienced it firsthand. She came of age during one of Ireland's bleakest economic periods when many, especially those from rural communities like her own, Cahersiveen, in the far west of the island, felt they had no choice but to leave. The promise of opportunity and adventure did little to temper the heartbreak of saying goodbye to childhood homes, and the family and friends left behind.

Her association with the Irish American Partnership (IAP), now approaching 33 years in all, matches particularly well with her personal story as told on these pages by Chris Lovett for Boston Irish.

The Partnership connects Irish and Irish American communities directly with education and community programs in Ireland, North and South, honoring their heritage by investing in Ireland's youth. Thanks to its incredible network of support, the program has disbursed \$32 million in assistance to Ireland since 1986. The Partnership states its mission crisply:

- We connect Irish students, schools, and organizations with our passionate supporters who want to help.
- We empower the next generation by equipping teachers and community leaders with the resources they need to educate and inspire.
- We invest in the people, culture, and ideas that build a peaceful and prosperous Ireland, one that preserves the Irish way of life we cherish while also creating a more inclusive and equitable society for all.
- We strengthen the global Irish community by linking the diaspora back to Ireland, North and South.
- We value transparency and efficiency, showing where each dollar is spent and the impact they have

The IAP was founded in 1986 with Marine Corps Gen. P.X. Kelley, the 28th commandant of the Corps as founding chairman of the board and the legendary longtime speaker of the US House of Representatives Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill as its first spokesman and public advocate.

Seed-funded by a grant of 50,000 Irish pounds from the Irish government and support from philanthropist Charles "Chuck" Feeney, the Partnership has provided grants to more than 500 primary schools, higher educational institutions, and hundreds of community organizations across Ireland.

Mary Sugrue has recruited energetic board members, including a dynamic chairman, Michael T. Clune. At the same time, she met her goal to increase the percentage of women on the board and prioritized diversity across sectors. The result is a large, active board spanning across corporate and civic sectors in both the U.S. and Ireland.

No stranger to philanthropy from having served on the Board of many charitable organizations, Clune found



Mary Sugrue has recruited energetic board members, including a dynamic chairman, Michael T. Clune, above. Pictured below is Partnership founder and currently president emeritus of the IAP Joseph Leary, who hired Mary. He notes that "supporters throughout the country respect her for her truthfulness and non-exaggeration of the Partnership's accomplishments. Mary Sugrue is truly an Irish Star in Boston."



a way to honor the generations before him and invest in a bright future for a country he loves. In 2018, he made a particularly meaningful gift to the local school on the island of Inishbofin in honor of his grandfather, Michael A. Clune.

A small community faced with a dwindling livelihood from fishing, Inishbofin would recover some of the lost ground as a destination for visitors. Clune made a \$25,000 grant from the Partnership that was used for iPads, computers, a telescope, and a weather station, all things, Clune said, that could help prepare students for opportunities in the world outside—or make life on the island more sustainable.

One response to the country's changing times was a donation of \$1 million to the Peter McVerry Trust, a charity that helps people struggling with homelessness, substance abuse, and social disadvantage. The Partnership announced that the money would help provide education for teens removed from mainstream schools.

Recent projects supported by the Partnership in Ireland also show the most entrenched problems can overlap with modern developments. In Northern Ireland, that can mean trying to surmount the long divide between Protestant and Catholic communities while serving an influx of new immigrants.

BOSTON IRISH STAFF



The Boston Irish Honors 2021

In 1993, Leary gave her a different assignment: Speaking for the younger people of Ireland at a Partnership event in New York City honoring the Irish Republic's first female president, Mary Robinson. The administrator and convenor had to step into the spotlight.

"It was my first time standing up at a podium," she recalled. "And I just spoke from the heart about what it was like to leave Ireland."

More turns at the podium would follow, but Sugrue admitted she still found the role challenging. "It's an honor—I mean that people would support and listen and engage," she said. "But, to me, I'd rather be down at the table having a cup of tea with them."

The Partnership's chairman, Michael T. Clune, met Sugrue after one of her turns at the podium, in Chicago. He was struck by what he called her passion, as well as her background in education. The same qualities also figured in her work as the Partnership's "rainmaker."

"What doesn't make a good rainmaker," he added, "is when organizations hire people that are so-called super salespeople, and they come in and they have all the PowerPoints and the data and the backup, but they don't have the heart and passion in it."

In the years following Mary's joining the Partnership's staff, Ireland was going through significant changes. The slow economy and the focus on troubles in the North had given way to stories about opportunities created by membership in the European Union and the boom years, roughly 1994-2007, when the "Celtic Tiger" was touted as the "Silicon Valley of Europe." After boom, bust, and austerity, the more recent economic rebound a dozen years later in Ireland and in Europe as a whole has been hampered by the Covid 19 pandemic and a shortage of affordable housing.

After becoming the program's executive director in 2011, Sugrue crafted a plan for recovery that increased revenue by 86 percent—at a time of

slow recovery from the Great Recession in the US. Along with becoming the Partnership's CEO in 2016, she recruited senior leadership for a board of directors that, according to Clune, "needed new blood." The result was a larger board with more women, but he also noted the recruits were "outstanding" leaders from corporate and civic sectors.

The other reason for the change was that, as Clune put it, "the organization needed to change with the changing times in Ireland."

In addition to work for the Partnership, Sugrue has supported other philanthropic efforts beyond the Irish or Irish American communities. These include the Rian Immigrant Center and the Thomas S. Durant, MD, Golf Tournament that supports the Fellowship for Refugee Medicine.

That event's chair and Partnership board member Bill Reilly said, "For years, she volunteered to help us organize the Durant golf tournament, and they always went off without a hitch, thanks to her dedication. She is an amazing person."

Recent projects supported by the Partnership in Ireland also show the most entrenched problems can overlap with new challenges. In the north, that can mean trying to surmount the long divide between Protestants and Catholics in education while serving an influx of new immigrants, even from countries outside of Europe.

"There's a long road in understanding our shared history," said Sugrue. "The more we can bring young people together to do that, that's where we see our support."

Among those viewing results of that support was Mary Conroy Henderson, on a visit with a group from Boston. At the Cliftonville Integrated Primary School in Belfast, she saw signs that established frontiers within and between worlds were being reimagined.

"That was absolutely heartwarming," she recalled, "to see flags flying, the little flags—the hallway of all the nationalities



Mary Sugrue and her children, Liam McAleer, 22, who attends Massachusetts Maritime Academy, where he's studying international maritime business, and Eileen McAleer, 24, a Boston College graduate who currently works as a nurse at Boston Medical Center.

that are in the school, and to think this is okay: Education isn't just for somebody that can say my lineage is X, Y, or Z, but this is for the new person also, who's now been introduced into the country."

In the Greater Boston area, Sugrue raised two children of her own, mostly as a single parent. Her daughter, Eileen, 24, graduated from Boston College and currently works as a nurse at Boston Medical Center. Her son Liam, 22, attends Mass. Maritime Academy, where he's studying international maritime business. One time when Eileen was very young, Mary recalls, childcare fell through and she was left to change diapers in a country club locker room while overseeing one of the Partnership's golf tournaments.

To Mary Sugrue, experiences like that amplified for her the challenges of being a working mother and inspired her to bring *Nollaig na mBan* – "Women's Christmas" – to the United States through a series of Partnership events celebrating the global leadership of Irish and Irish American women. Currently in its tenth year, *Nollaig na mBan* has

honored the contributions of many Irish luminaries, including Irish presidents Mary Robinson and Mary McAleese, Ambassador Anne Anderson, Irish Senator Joan Freeman, USAID Administrator Samantha Power, and *Glamour* Editor-in-Chief Samantha Barry.

Defining her own mission for guiding her children, Sugrue said, "I could instill in them to be confident and follow their instinct, to trust their gut, and to work hard."

One thing Sugrue did not inherit directly from her parents was knowledge of the Irish language, which she regularly uses to open her public speaking appearances. She keeps up her connection to Irish culture through its writers and her love of traditional music. In addition, there's the hiking, primarily in Ireland, with multiple trips to the Skelligs.

"I've been going there since I was a child," she said. "It's just that idea of a world with history, and the most quiet and peaceful place in the world—the remoteness of it."



At left, Mary (second left) and her siblings Pat, Eileen, Linda, Jimmy, and Ann before the Kerry v. Dublin All-Ireland Football Final on Sept. 1, 2019. Above, Pat enjoys a moment alongside Irish President Mary Robinson in 1993.



The Boston Irish Honors 2021 for Community Journalism

It's time to take a bow: Ed Forry is long overdue as Boston Irish honoree

By SETH DANIEL

Stories are central to the life of Ed Forry.

With just a short conversation, you realize he loves stories – loves to tell stories and loves the power that stories have to uplift, to center and to move forward a community.

There's no doubt he knows – and probably has told – so many of the inside stories in Boston over the years, some good and some bad. Though Forry would certainly defend the necessity at times to tell the bad stories, it's no doubt that he delights most in the stories that fill up a community with positivity and optimism.

For years Forry, now 77, told those stories in the Dorchester Reporter, which he and his wife Mary started up in 1983 and then, beginning in 1990, in the Boston Irish Reporter newspaper – now the website Boston Irish, which publishes a quarterly magazine.

In 2010, the Irish Reporter launched an effort to honor and uplift in person those in the Boston Irish community whose contributions have continued to enrich their heritage via the annual Boston Irish Honors luncheon – now in its 11th iteration.

But a sifting through all those past stories and the names of the distinguished honorees over the luncheon's history reveals that something was missing – Ed Forry's story.

"I was at one of the luncheons and I was trying to figure out who had the greatest impact and it occurred to me that the greatest impact on this community had come from the guy running the show – Ed Forry," said former US Sen. Paul Kirk, a Boston Irish past honoree and former Irish Honors board member. "The luncheon is about those who have done interesting and compelling things. There is an obvious and compelling story to tell about Ed: It's a story that should be told and Ed should be honored for it. They've done a really good job."

New England Council President Jim Brett, himself a past Irish Honors chairman and honoree, agrees with Sen. Kirk. "I think this is long overdue for Ed. I understand he's reluctant. He wants to spotlight a recipient and not himself. Many people coming this year have said it's about time that Ed takes a bow. He embodies the art and soul of being Irish," Brett continued. "His faith is strong and he takes every task to heart. ... He's been a friend with such integrity. ... I'm proud and happy he's agreed to accept this long overdue recognition. I know his late wife, Mary, is looking down and saying, 'Well done,' and it's a great honor for his kids and grandkids to be able to see him accept, and to hear his story."

Forry grew up on Dorchester's Codman Hill, the youngest of five siblings



Ed Forry has kept his pulse on neighborhood news for most of his 77 years – from his pre-teen days broadcasting from a radio kit in his Dorchester basement to pioneering online coverage of Irish America.

Family photo

born to Eleanor (nee Toomey) and John Forry, Sr., both born in Massachusetts to Irish immigrant parents. John traced his roots back to Keash in County Sligo while Eleanor's people hailed from Cork before settling in South Boston in the late 1890s.

Ed first attended the Charles H Taylor School (named in honor of the man who founded the newspaper the Boston Globe) – near his Vera Street home, then in the fourth grade made the much longer walk to St. Gregory's Elementary School. In 1958 he began his studies at Boston College High School – while watching his father head off to work daily at the MTA, where he was a proud card-carrying member of the Carmen's Union Local 589 and, later in his career, a foreman at the Charlestown train yard.

In his spare time, Ed fostered a love for telling stories to his neighbors through his favorite medium: radio. In the basement at home, he set up a low-frequency radio signal that beamed out his news updates, music and occasional commentary to the surrounding streets in Dorchester. Spreading the news and

commenting on it was a vocation that has lasted a lifetime.

In a profile written in 2008, Ed told longtime Boston Globe reporter Jack Thomas: "My friend Paul LaCamera... told me that I am the most parochial person he knows, and I thanked him, because that was the nicest thing he could say. When it comes to Dorchester, I am parochial. But growing up, we didn't think of ourselves as being from Dorchester. We thought of ourselves as being from Codman Hill or St. Gregory's or Lower Mills. We were all from villages within Dorchester, and it was a wonderful, very simple place to grow up in. I still can't forget the smell of chocolate from Walter Baker in Lower Mills. Whenever there was a southeast wind, the aroma of chocolate swept across our neighborhood, and my mother would say, if you smell chocolate, it's going to rain."

Forry's aunt, Kathleen 'Kate' Forry, was another big influence in his formative years. She worked as the chief secretary and Boston gatekeeper for US Rep. John W. McCormack, the

South Boston native who went on to become the Speaker of the House. 'Uncle John' – as he was known to the Forry kids – was Ed's political north star and Kate was his protector.

Ed worked his way on and off through Boston College (he took his diploma in 1969), joined the Air Force National Guard, and remained in the Guard through 1972. He also donned the uniform of the United States Postal Service and carried mail across Boston, mainly out of his home office, the Codman Square-based 02124 zip code. But Ed – an early proponent of the civil rights movement and an admirer of Martin Luther King, Jr. – could also be counted on to bring mail to mainly Black sections of the city, even at times of unrest.

"Dad volunteered to deliver mail to homes in Grove Hall in the aftermath of Dr. King's assassination," says Bill Forry, his son and business partner. "Boston – like many American cities – was convulsed in violent protest and Ed felt that way, too: He was outraged. His answer was to don a black armband and bring that essential service – the mail – to residents in neighborhoods that others were afraid to enter. That was an act of solidarity and courage that says a lot about his values and his moral compass."

While at BC, Ed continued his passion for telling stories on the radio and, often with his close pal W. Paul White, he did play-by-play and commentary coverage of BC football and basketball games on the campus station, WVBC. Ed was quick with his analyses and passionate about basketball in particular. As a side gig, he hawked popcorn in the old Boston Garden throughout the 1960s, affording him a chance to watch his all-time favorite athlete, Bill Russell, dominate the decade for the Green.

Back home in Dorchester, he found a different medium suited him just as well: newspapers. His commentaries in the now-defunct Dorchester Argus-Citizen gave him an entry into the world of publishing. He was handy with a camera, too, and enjoyed the intimate nature and immediate impact that his storytelling had on the people he cared about the most: his neighbors.

Ed met the love of his life, Mary Casey, of the Belmont Caseys, while working at Sack Theatres shortly before graduating from BC. He prevailed upon Mary – raised by Irish-born parents with roots in Leitrim and Mayo – to move to Dorchester when they were married in 1969.

As they started their lives together – and eventually welcomed Bill (1973) and Maureen Eleanor (1978) – Ed worked for a time as an aide to state Sen. Bill Bulger, who has long been a friend and mentor to him.

He worked for a year at the Greater



The Boston Irish Honors 2021

Boston Chamber of Commerce, and for five years as communications director for ABCD, the Boston's anti-poverty agency.

In 1977, he was hired to work in community reinvestment at 1st American Bank, formerly Dorchester Savngs. There weren't many stories to delve into at the bank, and seeing it as a dead-end job, Ed up and quit abruptly, a move that soon led to the pursuit of his dream: his own newspaper, founded in 1983 as the Dorchester Reporter, a monthly publication. The Boston Irish Reporter — which the Forrys launched in 1990 — was seen by them as a way to fill a void in news about Greater Boston's vibrant Irish American community, which at the time was largely served by New York-based media outlets.

"Boston's Irish community was not their main focus and, like the Dorchester project, Ed and Mary felt that the stories of Boston's Irish would best be told by people who lived here," said Bill Forry. "This, despite the fact that neither Ed nor Mary had ever visited Ireland and wouldn't for another few years."

In those formative years, and in some lean times between then and now, friends like Jim Brett have always kept close to Ed because of the integrity and passion he showed to them and the community. Jim Brett's brother Harry took most of the pictures for the Irish Reporter when it started, and when things were tough, he allowed Ed to pay him later when things turned brighter.

Since that time, Jim Brett said, he and Ed have grown very close as friends, as well as professional colleagues — not to mention being persistent boosters of Dorchester and the Boston Irish community.

"You can't really know Ed Forry unless you understand his commitment to Dorchester," said Brett, who notes that Ed started the Originally from Dorchester — commonly called "OFD" — association with his friend Steve Cosmopolous in 1986. "That commitment flows through the very core of his being...Dorchester is in his DNA...The point is we go way back and the Forrys and Bretts are very close."

Brett noted that the Boston Irish Reporter and its successor magazine/website Boston Irish have been the central repository for all information regarding local happenings, reporting on its sporting events, featuring commentary by the late Bill O'Donnell and history pieces by Peter Stevens, and relaying hard-to-find news and social occasions from within the Boston Irish community. Tom Mulvoy, who joined the Reporter's team in 2002 after a stellar 35-year editing career at the Boston Globe, has led a team of writers and contributors whose work is now published as a quarterly magazine, with a heavy online presence.

"You want to know what's going on in the Irish community? Boston Irish," said Brett. "We may not have the voice we have in this community without it."

Sen. Kirk said honoring Forry is the correct thing to do. In his view, Ed's was a key voice from Boston in helping set the stage for a peace settlement in

the North of Ireland. Many in Boston's Irish community once supported Irish Republican causes, many of which led to violence, and some sent money to help buy arms destined for Belfast or Derry. Kirk played a major role in efforts to change that dynamic and Forry, he says, used his voice and his pen to inform Bostonians about a different approach.

"John Hume had a different view and he came and spoke here, remarking that there was 47 percent unemployment in Derry (where he was from). He would say if people could work, they wouldn't need guns. He encouraged a lot of folks in Boston to invest in economic development over time." [Hume also earned the Nobel Prize for Peace for his work in advancing the peace process in Northern Ireland].

"My sense is that the Boston Irish newspaper helped inform the community of the wisdom of that advice and had a major place in getting the word to the community to invest in the economic development of Ireland," continued Kirk. "The next thing you know, you had the Celtic Tiger that everyone was so excited about. Ireland did a 180 in its economic fortunes. That newspapers were helping on that score was a great contribution."

The Boston Irish Honors luncheon was launched in 2010 to convene people from the Boston Irish community in one room to shine the spotlight on a deserving few — with an eye toward lifting up the collective Irish-American experience and our own immigrant roots.

As Jim Brett puts it, it's the one time of year the community gathers to say thank you.

"The luncheon is probably one of the 'must' events of the year to attend," he said, noting he's glad that it is back to an in-person event this year. "It's a who's who of the business community and leaders of the city...To receive a special recognition is a great honor for a lot of people. They can be honored for their achievement obviously, but also for their heritage. They are contributors in making the city a better place."

Added Kirk: "The luncheons are a vehicle for different discussions of our heritage and to note individuals who contributed to something larger than themselves and left that concern better than they found it...The luncheon fits in with the professional vision and the mission the Forrys have had from the outset."

In 2004, Ed and their children suffered a devastating personal loss with Mary's death in 2004 after a stirring battle against pancreatic cancer. Bill Bulger delivered the eulogy at her funeral.

The grieving Ed threw himself into a personal cause as a way to begin healing: the first legislative campaign of perhaps the most famous Forry to date, Linda Dorcena Forry, his daughter-in-law, who was seeking a House seat from Dorchester in the Legislature. Her political ascent in Boston and Massachusetts thereafter was aided a great deal by Ed's good counsel and network. When she later won the state Senate seat that includes South Boston, Ed assisted her, a truly

(Continued on page 12)



The Forry family (clockwise from top left): John Forry, Aaron Sorrell, Conor Forry, Bill Forry, Nate Sorrell, Ed Forry, Madeline Forry, Norah Forry, Lianna Sorrell, Maureen Forry-Sorrell, Linda Dorcena Forry.

Family photo



The late Mary Casey Forry, John Forry, Ed Forry in 2004.



The "original" Forry clan on Vera Street circa 1965. From left: Joe, Eleanor, John, Mary (Forry) Tanner, John F. Forry, Eleanor (Forry) McManus, Ed Forry.

Family photo



Making the rounds with Ed Forry



Backing up Sen. Bill Bulger circa 1971; on a visit "home" with Della Costello and cousin May Guiry at her pub in Clonmel; sharing some Dorchester news with Boston Mayor Tom Menino and Gov. Deval Patrick.



Sharing a laugh with Liam Clancy; Ed with Celtics GM Red Auerbach; confirmation day at St. Gregory's with Cardinal Richard J. Cushing, circa 1957.



Chosen professions — On the mail truck in Dorchester, 1965. At Keesler AFB in Mississippi, 1967. Chatting with Sen. Warren at the Reporter offices in 2019.

(Continued from page 11)

unique presence in that role, in staging the annual St. Patrick's Day Breakfast, a feat that won Sen. Forry international acclaim, including a gushing profile in Dublin's Irish Times that said of her: "The New star of Irish America is black and a woman."

Ed also was all-in for the election and re-election of President Barack Obama, launching a group of "Boston Irish Voters for Obama-Biden."

Ed's commitment to Ireland has

stayed central to his mission in life, now with his longtime companion, Brigid 'Della' Costello, at his side. A native of Galway City, Della brought Ed even closer to his ancestral homeland by their frequent trips back to Ireland. After a longer-than-hoped-for hiatus due to the pandemic, Ed and Della are looking forward to a return visit for him in 2022.

Last year, Ed won a lifetime achievement award from the New England Newspaper and Press Association that specifically saluted his close to 50 years

spent in community journalism.

"The selectors took notice of Ed's active and meaningful work over the last 37 years doing street-level, urban newspapering in Dorchester, Boston's largest and most diverse neighborhood in giving him the award," the group noted at the time. "For many who know him and his work, the honoree is a latter-day equivalent of the small-town newspaper editor memorialized in so many movies and histories."

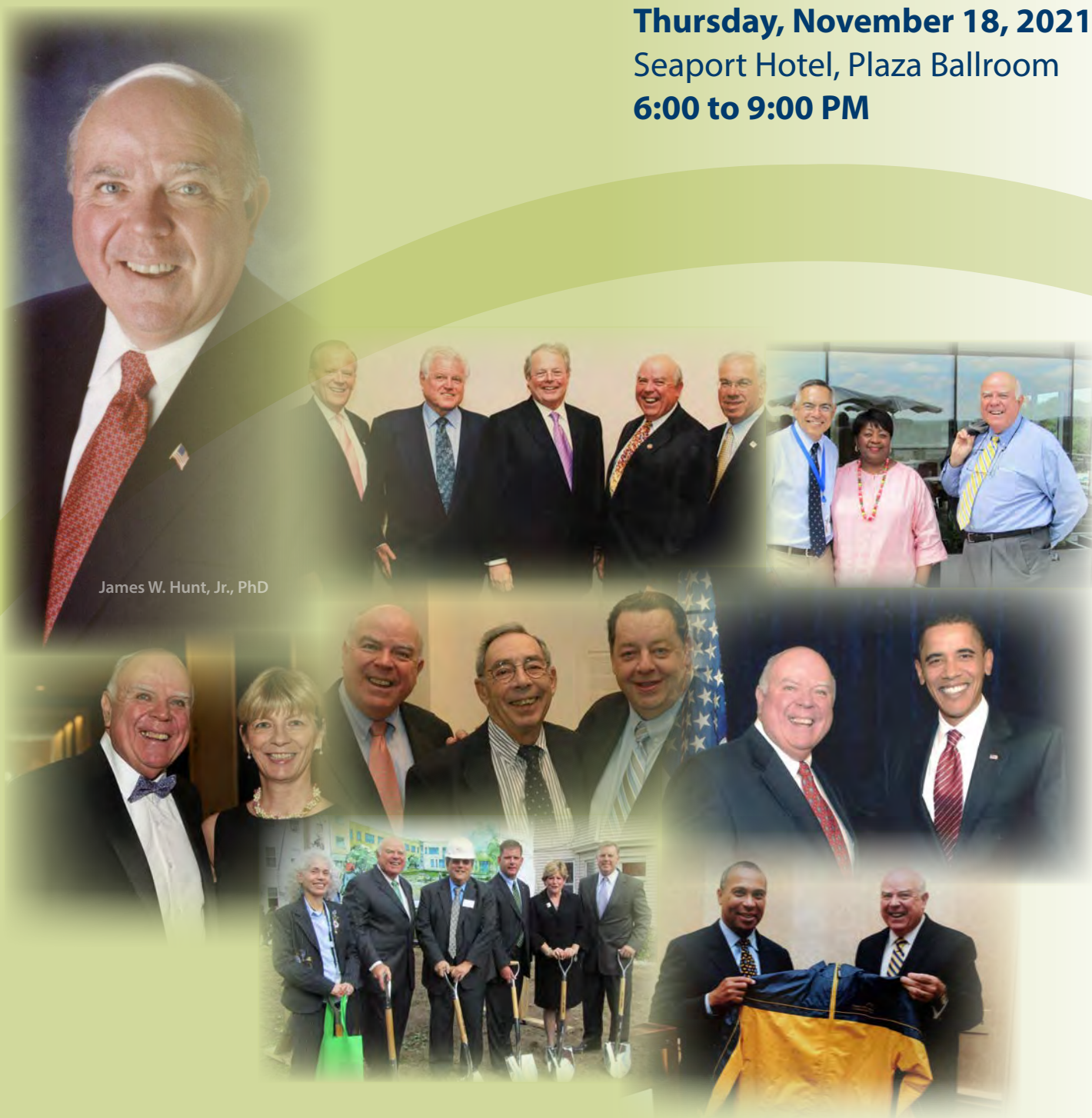
On the Irish front, Sen. Kirk insists,

Ed's legacy will be long-lasting well beyond his Dorchester neighborhood.

"To put it in a word, Ed's impact from my perspective has been 'historic,'" said Kirk. "No one, in my opinion, has done more to educate and inform us as a local ethnic community and remind us of historical events both here and in Ireland than Ed Forry... I can't think of anyone that had more of a positive impact in so many ways on this community."

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HONOREES OVER THE YEARS

The BIR is a family-owned news publication. In keeping with our own heritage, we tell the stories of exemplary Irish families and individuals who share our common roots in Boston and Ireland. Boston Irish Honors debuted in 2010 and has become an annual highlight on the fall calendar, with an appreciative audience of some 400 Boston business, civic, neighborhood and political leaders in recognition of Boston's Irish heritage. The event, in support of Boston and New England's own hometown Irish American newspaper & website, gives public recognition for achievements in public service, business and community leadership.

2019
Jim Carmody, Kathleen & John Drew, Grace Cotter Regan

2018
Rev. Richard "Doc" Conway; Mary & Bob Scannell; Dr. Trevor McGill, MD

2017
Nora, Annmarie & Bill Kennedy; Tom Tinlin, Kevin Cullen

2016
Jim & Mary (Cahill) Judge, Senator Paul G Kirk Jr, Kevin & Joe Leary & family

2015
Margaret Stapleton, Mike Sheehan, BPD Commissioner William Evans family

2014

Katherine Craven, Boston Mayor Marty Walsh, The Burke family of South Boston

2013
Therese Murray, Gerry & Bob Mulligan family, John P. Driscoll Jr.(Posthumous)

2012
Congressman Richard Neal, Brendan & Greg Feeney, Mary & Bob Muse & family

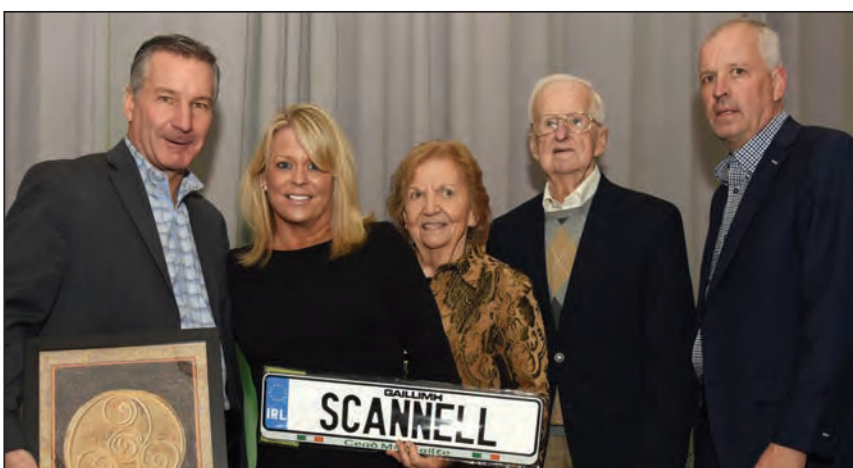
2011
Kathleen O'Toole, State Senator Tom Kennedy, & families of Joseph Corcoran, James Hunt Jr., & Mark & Tom Mulvoy

2010
Hon. Ed Markey, John Donohue, and Irish families of Peg Geraghty, Jim Brett & Mayor John B. Hynes

2019



2018



2017



2016



2015



2014



2013



2012



2011

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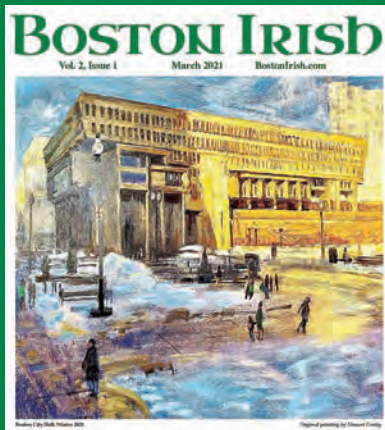


2010

PHOTOS BY MARGARET BRETT HASTINGS



Here's How Boston's Irish Stay Connected



Boston Common at Christmastime.

Original painting by Vincent Crotty

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