



Muskegon Irish American Society

NEWS



Spring 2018

Dr. Phil O'Dwyer to Speak at Our Century Club Dinner Thursday, May 3



Dr. Phil O'Dwyer, Michigan Irish American Hall of Fame, Class of 2015, will be our featured guest speaker. His topic will be: *Governing in Ireland and the United States - Who's got it right?* The United States and Ireland each won their hard-fought freedom from the British. And yet, each country adopted very different forms of government, and the differences and similarities are fascinating.

Dr. Phil O'Dwyer, is uniquely qualified to speak on this intriguing topic. He was born and raised in Ireland, and received much of his education there. Then as an immigrant in Michigan he eventually was elected as the highly respected Mayor of the City of Berkley. Nowhere else can we hear this interesting program!

O'Dwyer was born in Holycross, County Tipperary, Ireland and immigrated to the U.S. in 1973 to attend the University of Notre Dame. Six years later he became an American citizen and moved to Berkley, MI. In addition to his job as mayor, he works full time as Dr. of Psychology at a hospital in Garden City, Michigan. He is a Certified Social Worker and a Certified Addictions Counselor.

Though he has lived in the U.S. for more than four decades, O'Dwyer still speaks with a gentle Irish accent. Like so many immigrants, he said he sees America as a land of opportunity.

"As a dual citizen of Ireland and the United States I hear the sound of two different drums," he said. "There is the rich heritage of the past and the enduring call to not stop thinking about tomorrow ... It is essentially a fulfillment of the American Dream to come here from Ireland and keep plugging along and see good things happen." *Oakland Press*

Dr. O'Dwyer has a wide reputation as an exceptional speaker, and we are very fortunate to have him join us for our annual Irish heritage dinner. This is one event not to be missed!

WHAT: Muskegon Irish American Society Annual Spring Dinner

WHERE: Century Club Ballroom, 356 W. Western Avenue, Muskegon, MI

WHEN: Thursday, May 3, 2018

5:30 p.m. Social Hour with entertainment by Britta and Roy Portenga

6:15 p.m. Dinner by McGovern's

7:00 p.m. Presentation by Dr. Phil O'Dwyer

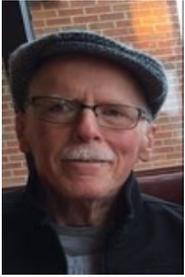
COST: \$15.00 per person, Reservations are required by **April 30th**, to Kathleen Marek (231) 759-7344

PLEASE NOTE: This a BRING YOUR OWN BEVERAGE EVENT. If you wish to have beer, wine or spirits, YOU MUST BRING YOUR OWN!



Saying Goodbye

ROBERT MAYO O'BRIEN, *Fruitport Township*



Mr. Robert (Bobby) Mayo O'Brien, 70, passed away unexpectedly, Saturday, January 13, 2018, at Sanctuary at McAuley, where he was receiving rehab services following an illness. Bob had courageously fought Parkinson's disease. Bob was born August 2, 1947, in Ludington, MI., to Thomas and Vera (Reynolds) O'Brien. He was a proud 1965 grad of Muskegon Heights School, attended MCC, Ferris State, & Northern Michigan University, receiving his bachelor of science degree in Physical & Health Education, and Business. Bob and Eileen (Clarke) O'Brien were married October 14, 1967. They were blessed with three wonderful children, Elizabeth, Brandon, and Jeff. Bob loved all that was music, and sports. He was active in both his high school and college choirs, and sang lead for many years with the Muskegon Shoreline Chorus. Bob even sang during brain surgery 10 yrs. ago, as the surgeon placed his deep brain stimulator for Parkinson's. He was an avid golfer, runner, cyclist, and swimmer. Bob wore many hats in his lifespan: golf caddie, mug washer at A&W, usher/manager at the Regent Theater, sales at Reid Tool Supply, part time teacher, Baker Business College, mental health worker, restaurant manager, Nursing Home Director, Pharmaceutical rep, and teacher. He retired from Muskegon Heights Public Schools in 2007 due to his Parkinson's disease. He truly enjoyed every job he had, especially teaching. Bob also volunteered as a peewee football and soccer coach, scout leader, PTO president, cancer educator, and local NAMI president, just to name a few. Bob was preceded in death by his parents, brother Christopher, son Brandon, and brothers-in law, Kevin and Patrick Clarke, and Ed Batka. Bob was so dearly loved, and will be deeply missed by Eileen, his wife of 50 years; daughter, Elizabeth, and her son Conor, of Kalamazoo; son Jeff, of Muskegon; brothers Tommy (Wink) of Homosassa Springs, FL, Denny (Cheryl) of Kalamazoo, MI, and Mark of Grand Rapids, MI; sisters-in-law, and brothers-in law, Cathy Mathieu & John Hyde, Margie Batka, Ed & Margie Clarke, and Rose & Doug Jolman, his cousins, the Reynolds', Orr, and O'Brien Clans, and many nieces and nephews, and their children. A celebration of Bob's life was held March 16, 2018 and on Saturday, March 17th he had his parade!

Christopher M. Murray, *Dearborn Heights*



Christopher M. Murray, 85, passed away on Friday, March 2, 2018. Beloved husband to Mary. Dear father of Tom (Maureen), John (Brenda), Patrick (Terrie), Ann (Anthony) Slusser, Michael (Terri), Maureen (Noel) Kelly, and Mary (Chris) Laney. Survived by 25 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren. Dear brother to Nancy (John) Newell, Peggy (Dick) Lemke, Frank (Kathleen), Vincent (Margaret), Joe (Patsy) and the late Gerry (Tish); also survived by many nieces and nephews. Chris Murray left Ireland for Detroit in 1954 but Ireland never left Murray, who spent years supporting and promoting his native culture in his new hometown. "He was instrumental in reviving Irish culture in Detroit," said Kathleen O'Neill, host of Detroit Irish Radio, a weekly program featuring Irish news and culture. "He devoted all his life to promoting and preserving Irish culture, especially traditional music." A native of Gurteen, County Sligo, Murray became active in Irish-American groups shortly after immigrating. He played Irish football with the Gaelic Athletic Association as a young man and in the early 1980s helped his sons found the Detroit Wolfe Tones Irish Football Club, which went on to win three North American Championships. A decade later, he helped his daughters found a women's team, the St. Anne's Irish Football Club. Murray founded his own construction company, building homes and additions in the Dearborn area for years. But his real passion was traditional Irish music. In 1967, Murray was elected president of the Gaelic League of Detroit, a post he'd hold for 18 years in a couple of stints. He made music a priority, working to bring international groups like the Chieftains, the Irish Rovers, the Clancy Brothers and the Wolfe Tones to Detroit at a time when those groups mostly played larger cities. His love for music came from his hometown in the west of Ireland, a hotbed of traditional Irish music. He often joined in for sessions, playing the spoons in time to the music. In 2013, for Public Service, Chris was inducted into the Michigan Irish American Hall of Fame.



Annual Pub Party

On January 28th we had a capacity crowd at our annual Pub Party at Hennessy's. The Conklin Ceili Band provided our musical entertainment, and Mary Anne Gorman won our raffle of Waterford Crystal and a year's attendance at Hennessy's monthly whiskey school. See you next year!





St. Patrick's Day Parade



45th Annual Flag Raising



2018 Dues Can Be Paid with PayPal

Just a reminder...your 2018 dues need to be paid as soon as possible! Our dues remain a bargain at \$20 per family, and are essential to support our club's programs and the newsletter. An added convenience, is the ability to pay your dues on PayPal. If you wish to use PayPal, go to our website and click on the "Members" section. There is an added service fee of \$1.50 to use PayPal. Payment by check is always welcome!

