

FALL 2024

Issue No.2

In this newsletter...

In this edition, we take a look back at some memorable moments, including highlights from recent events featuring influential figures who are helping our organization. Dive into articles covering important topics relating to the Potatoe famine and events that took place in the heart of the Irish Community in Montreal and take a look at our upcoming events.

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**Montreal
Irish Monument
Park Foundation**

TO
PRESERVE FROM DESECRATION
THE REMAINS OF 6,000 IMMIGRANTS
WHO DIED OF SHIP FEVER
A.D. 1847-8.
THIS STONE
IS ERECTED BY THE WORKMEN
OF
MESSRS PETO, BRASSEY & BETTS,
EMPLOYED IN THE CONSTRUCTION
OF THE
VICTORIA BRIDGE
A.D. 1859

**La Fondation du
Parc du Monument
Irlandais de Montréal**

This fall at the Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation





(From left to right) His Excellency John Concannon, ambassador of Ireland to Canada, Fergus Keyes, President of the MIMPF, and Mrs. Mary Concannon.

Reception for the Ambassador of Ireland

The Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation was proud to join the Irish community in welcoming Ambassador Concannon and Mrs. Mary Concannon to Canada during a warm reception at The Forget House in Montreal. Hosted by Bryan O'Gallagher, Honorary Consul of Ireland to Québec, the event celebrated the strong historical ties between Ireland and Québec.

The Foundation was honored to be among distinguished Irish organizations invited, including Ciné Gael Montréal, the School of Irish Studies at Concordia, and the St. Patrick's Society of Montreal, showcasing the vibrant Irish culture in our city. Special guests included Dennis Dawson, Grand Marshall, and Lisa Shortt, Community Development Advisor at SRQEA (Secrétariat au relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise).

Guests enjoyed a memorable evening of Irish fusion music by Montreal's own Gráinne, further highlighting the rich cultural connections we strive to preserve. The Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation remains committed to honoring these shared traditions and strengthening our community.

Read more about the reception

Embassy of Ireland:

<https://www.ireland.ie/en/canada/ottawa/news-and-events/news-archive/irish-community-reception-montreal/>



(From left to right) Bruno Picard, engineer at Hydro-Québec and chair of MIMPF Construction Committee, Erik Provost, planning advisor & team leader at the City of Montreal, Patricia Lussier & Marie-Eve Parent, associates and landscape architects at Lemay, Stéphanie Fortin, urban planner with the City of Montreal



(From left to right) Bryan O'Gallagher, Honorary Consul of Ireland to Québec, Diane Engilsh, founding member of the MIMPF, His Excellency John Concannon, ambassador of Ireland to Canada, Mrs. Mary Concannon and Elisabeth O'Higgins, second secretary at the embassy of Ireland.



President of the Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation, Fergus Keyes.



(From left to right) Lynn Lonergan Doyle, board member of MIMPF, Kelley O'Rourke, board member of MIMPF, Vivian Doyle-Kelly, board member of MIMPF, His Excellency John Concannon, ambassador of Ireland to Canada, Mrs. Mary Concannon, Scott Phelan, treasurer of MIMPF, Elisabeth O'Higgins, second secretary at the embassy of Ireland, Bryan O'Gallagher, Honorary Consul of Ireland to Québec, and Fergus Keyes, president of the MIMPF.



(From left to right) Mrs. Mary Concannon, Cody Diabo, Kahnawà:ke's Grand Chief, and His Excellency John Concannon, ambassador of Ireland to Canada.

Historic land transfer and Hydro-Québec support

On October 10th, Hydro-Québec unveiled their new "Station Des Irlandais" power plant. During this event, a major announcement was made: Hydro-Québec will be transferring nearly 4 acres of land surrounding the Black Rock to the Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation for the symbolic price of 1\$.

The importance of this land

This land has been sought by the Irish Community for nearly 150 years to establish a Memorial Space.

Hydro-Québec has been a dedicated partner in this project for about seven years. They have provided us with invaluable support, from offering suggestions to technical support.

What's next?

The next step will be the rerouting of adjacent streets by the City of Montreal to provide visibility for the Black Rock and establish a new gateway. This will allow everyone entering Montreal via the Victoria Bridge to go through the Park and the memorial of one of the most significant event in Montreal's (and even Canada's) history.



(From left to right) Tom Mulcair, former member of parliament and leader of the NDP, His Excellency John Concannon, ambassador of Ireland to Canada, Mrs. Mary Concannon and Marie-Claude Durand, member of the board of directors at Hydro-Québec.

Archeological finds

On the site of the Des Irlandais substation and the future site of the park, objects have been uncovered. Hydro-Québec conducted archeological surveys on the site, uncovering remains and artifacts linked to the makeshift hospitals that were built to treat Irish newcomers who had contracted typhus. The objects may have belonged to the patients or family members and caregivers who were at their bedside.



Everyday items from the mid-19th century, uncovered during archaeological digs conducted at the site (Ethnoscop 2018).



Members of the Board of Directors of the MIMPF visit the dig site during the decontamination work conducted for the future commemorative park, led by archaeologist Luis Trudel-Lopez (Ethnoscop).

Read more about the event

Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Blackrockmemorial>

Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation LinkedIn page:

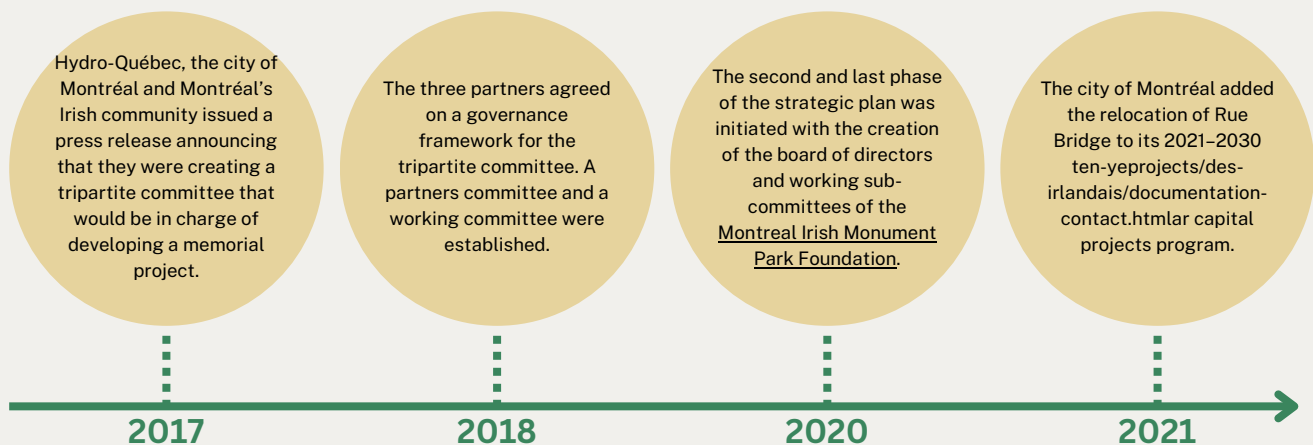
<https://www.linkedin.com/company/montrealirishmonument/posts/>

Hydro-Québec Press Release:

<http://news.hydroquebec.com/en/press-releases/2129/hydro-quebec-commissions-des-irlandais-substation-and-opens-the-door-to-the-creation-of-a-memorial-site/>

Radio Canada article: <https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/2111593/hydro-quebec-terrain-fosse-commune-typhus-irlandais>

Noovo info article: <https://www.noovo.info/nouvelle/hydro-quebec-cede-le-terrain-qui-accueillera-le-futur-parc-du-monument-irlandais.html>



Des Irlandais substation community project timeline

Architectural Fence



The architectural fence of the new Des Irlandais substation of Hydro-Québec, which will border the future Montreal Irish Monument Park.

A HUGE THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

The governments, corporations, and individuals who have lent their support to the foundation during its initial years of fundraising are indispensable to the project's success. Without their contributions, this long-awaited commemoration would remain a mere aspiration within the Irish community, rather than the tangible site it is evolving into.



Government of Ireland
Emigrant Support Programme



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



Secrétariat aux relations
avec les Québécois
d'expression anglaise



Minister Marc Miller Visits Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation

We were delighted to welcome Marc Miller, Canada's Minister of Immigration and MP for Montreal's southwest, on Friday, November 8th, 2024. A long-time supporter of the Black Rock memorial initiative, Minister Miller reviewed our progress, including planning, artistic renderings, cost estimates, and the recent land transfer formalized by Hydro-Quebec.

He reaffirmed his commitment to helping us explore federal funding opportunities and bringing the Canadian Government on board as a full partner. We thank Minister Miller for his time, support, and dedication to this important project. Together, we move closer to creating a world-class memorial space.



(From left to right) Fergus Keyes, president of MIMPF, Minister Mark Miller and Scott Phelan, Treasurer of MIMPF.

Read more about this event

Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation

Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Blackrockmemorial>



(From left to right) Craig Sauvé, member of Montreal city council, Fergus Keyes, president of MIMPF, Benoit Dorais, mayor of South-West district, and Scott Phelan treasurer of MIMPF.

Meeting with Benoit Dorais and Craig Sauvé

On Wednesday, November 13th, we had a productive meeting with Benoit Dorais, Mayor of the Southwest Borough and Vice-President of the Executive Committee, and Craig Sauvé, longtime City Councillor. Both have supported the Black Rock Memorial project for over a decade.

Mr. Dorais clarified the distinct roles of the Borough and the City of Montréal, particularly regarding the relocation of Bridge Street, a critical step for the project. While the City is committed to moving the street, they need to coordinate with Victoria Bridge authorities and other stakeholders. Mr. Dorais pledged to consult city engineers to identify the earliest possible timeline for this work.

For elements like site design, parking, and landscaping, the Borough holds primary responsibility. The planning team expressed readiness to collaborate with our designers at Lemay to align plans with local regulations and explore exemptions if needed.

We deeply appreciate Mr. Dorais, Mr. Sauvé, and the Borough planning team for their commitment and insights, which reflect their dedication to preserving and honoring the Irish heritage of Montreal's Southwest Borough.

Read more about this event

Montreal Irish Monument Park

Foundation Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/BlackRockMemorial>

A Black '47 descendant shares his enthusiasm

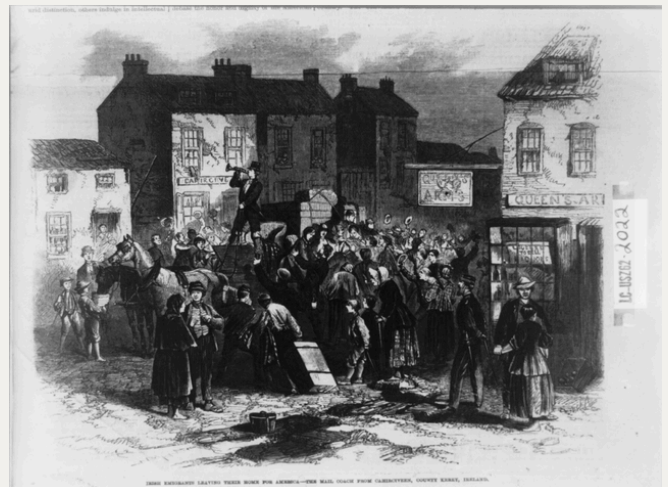
By Ed O'Shaughnessy

As a descendant of a famine exodus family which arrived in Montreal in Black '47, the same year that the Strokestown emigrants arrived, I am quite excited about the progress made to repurpose and rededicate the Montreal Irish Monument Park. Once figuratively in my ancestors' backyard, a daily reminder of their immigration experience renewed attention in a reimagined space will inform current and future generations of the life-changing, and in most cases life-sustaining, choices made by very brave and determined people.

Sadly, many of us know little about our Irish ancestors' emigration experiences. I was among the uninformed until pressed by a County Clare editor to write the story of my ancestors' exodus experience. Doing the research to get a story in print, I was surprised by what I was able to discover. While passenger manifests, Captain's logs, authenticated diaries and such are hard to come by, particulars of individual ship sailings are not difficult to uncover. Period Irish newspapers are very helpful in this regard. Combining emigration material with Dr George M. Douglas' record keeping at Grosse Isle, I was comforted to learn that my ancestors' transatlantic passage likely did not conform to the oft-heard "coffin ship" narrative.

Living in Coolmeen Townland, just north of the Shannon estuary, my ancestral family's emigration port was likely Limerick. During the five-month emigration season of 1847, the high-water mark of Irish emigration to British North America, Limerick sent fifty ships to Canada. Many of those ships were large timber ships which sailed directly to Grosse Isle. As it happened, Limerick was the safest Irish port from which to emigrate, if the transatlantic passage was direct. The mortality rate of direct passage from Limerick averaged 4% in 1847, with most ships reporting considerably lower mortality rates. We know this because of diligent recordkeeping by Dr Douglas.

Also uncovered during my research is the tantalizing possibility that one member of my emigrating family, Jeremiah O'Shaughnessy, has a particular claim to the earliest history of the Black Rock monument. As is well-known, the Black Rock monument exists because a mostly Irish immigrant construction population petitioned their London employers to place the 30-ton boulder over the site of a mass burial ground. It may be that Jeremiah O'Shaughnessy, the eldest son of the emigrating family, was one of the Irish immigrant construction crews. A documented chronology hints at this possibility. Could research confirm it?



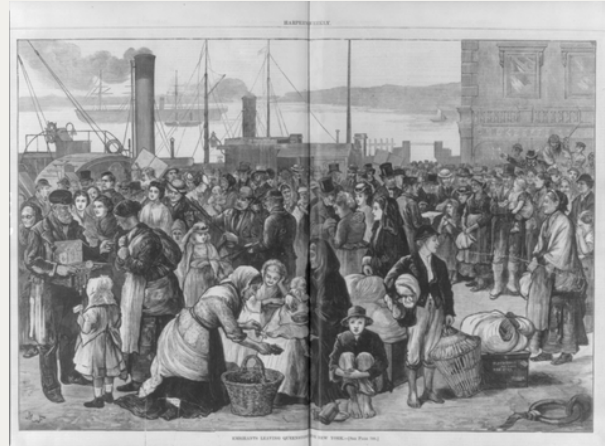
Irish emigrants leaving their home for America-the mail coach from Cahirciveen, County Kerry, Ireland
Library of Congress, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

In 1854, when Beto, Brassey and Betts began recruiting construction workers for the Victoria Bridge, Jeremiah O'Shaughnessy was twenty years old, able-bodied, and living within easy walking distance of the construction site. He was also in need of steady employment. Interestingly, three years into the construction project, in 1857, Roman Catholic sacramental records indicate that Jeremiah had found steady employment. Having passed the scrutiny of his parish priest and parishioners, which certainly included scrutiny of his financial suitability, Jeremiah, a journalier, married Ellen Carroll.

In 1859, as bridge construction neared completion, the Black Rock was dedicated to preserving in situ the remains of some 6,000 immigrants buried just beyond the fever sheds, dangerously near the western approach to the bridge. The intent to commemorate the site immemorial, etched into the face of the stone, was paid for by a subscription circulated among the construction crews.

In 1861, a year after the bridge was ceremoniously inaugurated, Jeremiah appeared in a civil directory as a foreman and bridge tender for the GTR. How had Jeremiah risen from a daily labourer to supervisory status with the GTR? The family likes to think that his performance during the bridge construction had something to do with it. GTR employment records were lost in an 1880s building fire, so we may never know. But if Jeremiah was one of the bridge construction laborers, it is no great leap of faith to believe that, in some small way, he participated in the actions that created the oldest monument to the Irish famine exodus in the world.

The envisioned Montreal Irish Monument Park has the potential to inspire far-reaching research into the great Irish famine exodus, a historical event without parallel. The potential will not be limited to Irish Canadians, but to any whose ancestors travelled to and through Montreal.



Emigrants leaving Queenstown (Ireland) for New York. Library of Congress, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons



Jeremiah O'Shaughnessy, likely taken at the time of his engagement or marriage, e.g. at the time of the construction of the Victoria Bridge.

The Montreal Irish Black Rock Memorial: Honoring the 6,000 Famine Victims of 1847

By Kelley O'Rourke

The Montreal Irish Black Rock Monument stands as a powerful testament to the resilience, tragedy, and enduring legacy of Irish immigrants who fled the Great Famine. Beneath this iconic granite boulder—the first public famine memorial in the world—lie the remains of over 6,000 Irish men, women, and children who perished in 1847. They succumbed to typhus and other illnesses after surviving the harrowing Atlantic crossing in overcrowded "coffin ships." This sacred site connects to broader narratives of Irish resilience, particularly the powerful symbolism of the Bronze Shoes from the National Famine Way in Ireland. These shoes, scattered along the 165-kilometer trail, memorialize the journey of 1,490 individuals forced to walk from Strokestown Park in County Roscommon to Dublin in 1847, highlighting the plight of famine emigrants ("The Trail – National Famine Way," n.d.).

A Journey of Survival: From Strokestown to Montreal

In May 1847, twelve-year-old Daniel Tighe was among 1,490 emigrants from Strokestown who embarked on a sorrowful 165-kilometer trek to Dublin, accompanied by Bailiff Robison. From there, they travelled to Liverpool and boarded overcrowded "coffin ships" bound for North America ("Shoe Stories – National Famine Way," n.d.).

The Bronze Shoes, as shown below in Ballynacarrigy, Mullingar, Ireland, capture their arduous journey. Each pair along the National Famine Way represents a life and a story, providing modern walkers with a tangible connection to history.

Through a free app and passport system, visitors to the trail learn stories of perseverance and tragedy, such as James Quinn, who died at Grosse Île, Quebec. His final words to his sons—"remember your soul and your liberty"—echo the resilience of the Irish emigrants ("The Trail – National Famine Way," n.d.).



Figure 1: Bronze Shoes and plinth located in Ballynacarrigy, Westmeath, Ireland

Image Credit: Kelley O'Rourke

Significance to the Black Rock Memorial

Montreal's Black Rock Memorial draws from this same spirit of remembrance. As part of the Global Irish Famine Way, an extension of the National Famine Trail, the memorial connects Montreal to other famine-related sites worldwide, including Grosse Île, Quebec City, Saint-Colomban, and beyond. The Bronze Shoes, set to be installed at the exhibition building on-site of the planned world-class Montreal Irish Black Rock Memorial Park, will tie the local legacy of 6,000 famine victims to the broader global narrative of Irish migration.



The Bronze Shoes arrive at the St. John's Newfoundland harbour from Ireland.

Image Credit: Lynn Doyle



Lynn Doyle receives the Bronze Shoes destined for the Montreal Black Rock Irish Memorial Park Foundation.

Image Credit: Lynn Doyle

Expanding the Global Irish Famine Way

In May 2024, the Global Irish Famine Way was officially launched, linking Irish emigrant stories to locations in Canada, the U.S., South Africa, Australia, and the U.K. This ambitious project honors the enduring impact of the Irish Famine diaspora by connecting famine-related sites worldwide (“Launch of The Global Irish Famine Way – National Famine Way,” n.d.).

In Canada, other confirmed locations will host the Bronze Shoes, symbolizing the resilience and journey of famine emigrants. These sites include:

- St. John’s Basilica, Newfoundland
- Grosse Île, Quebec
- Quebec City, Quebec
- Saint-Colomban, Quebec
- Black Rock Memorial Park, Montreal
- Hamilton, Ontario
- Macdonald Gardens Park, Ottawa
- Toronto, Ontario
- Niagara, Ontario
- Saint John Partridge Island, New Brunswick
- Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island

Additional locations planned or under discussion include Kingston, Richmond, Lotbinière, Smiths Falls, and others (“Launch of The Global Irish Famine Way – National Famine Way,” n.d.).

A Universal Message

Former Ambassador Eamonn McKee, at the launch of the Global Irish Famine Way, reflected on its universal resonance:

"The compassionate reception of the Famine Irish around the world has a universal message resonant today: Dedicated to all those who offer hope through compassion and success through opportunity to the stranger on your shore." ("May 2024," n.d.)

By integrating Montreal’s Black Rock Memorial into this network, the site becomes a powerful point of reflection on Irish resilience and the global impact of famine migration.

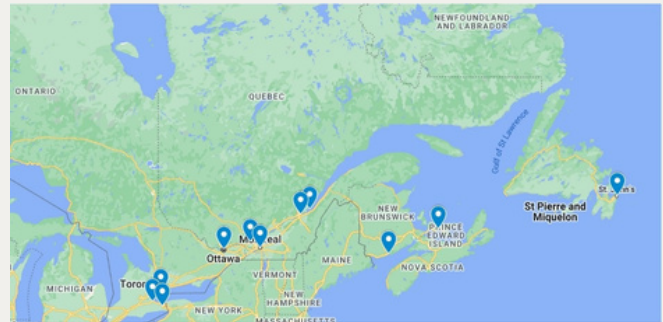


Figure 4: A glance of what the Global Irish Famine Way looks like in Canada.

Created with Google My Maps



Lynn Doyle and Dr. Eamonn McKee, former Ambassador of Ireland, holding the Bronze Shoes. Image Credit: Lynn Doyle

References

- “Launch of The Global Irish Famine Way – National Famine Way.” n.d. Accessed November 20, 2024. <https://nationalfamineway.ie/launch-of-the-global-irish-famine-way/>.
- “May 2024.” n.d. Eamonncmckee. Accessed November 24, 2024. <https://eamonncmckee.com/2024/05/>.
- “Shoe Stories – National Famine Way.” n.d. Accessed November 20, 2024. <https://nationalfamineway.ie/shoe-stories/>.
- “The Story of the 1,490 – National Famine Way.” n.d. Accessed November 20, 2024. <https://nationalfamineway.ie/about-the-1490/the-story-of-the-1490/>.
- “The Trail – National Famine Way.” n.d. Accessed November 20, 2024. <https://nationalfamineway.ie/the-trail/>.

Queen Selection Event for the queen and court of the 200th Saint-Patrick's Day parade in Montreal

By Addie Derouin

On November 17th, the Queen Selection Event for the United Irish Societies of Montreal took place. But this was more than your typical Queen Selection Event, as this year the judges would be selecting the court for their 200th St. Patrick's Day parade.

It was on the 20th of March, 1824, that the *Canadian Spectator* describes the first reception that took place for Saint-Patrick's Day. About thirty men gathered at the Mansion House (current Bonsecours market) to celebrate the patron saint of the Irish. This was the first Saint-Patrick's Day parade in Montreal. For a long time, the organization of the parade was exclusively left to men. It wasn't until 1940 that *The Gazette* highlighted the presence of women at the banquet as "a revival of the custom of many years ago." It was in 1956 that the first Queen Selection Event took place.

Today, the young women who participated in this event followed in the footsteps of many other women who were selected as queens and princesses for their talents, personalities, and implications in the Irish community. But one aspect that is often overlooked is the courage these young women have to stand on stage and talk in front of a large crowd.

Picture by Jean-Paul Gill.
Archives de la Ville de
Montréal.
VM94,SY,SS1,SSS05,D168.



(Left to right) Princess Madison Lalonde, Princess Alexia Eryn Brausewetter-Day, Queen Amanda Keating, Princess Kasey Lamer and Princess Bernice Djaballah

Especially one with so many important people in the Irish community. This year, we had the honour of having Peadar O'Lamha, deputy head of mission from the embassy of Ireland to Canada, present, among other esteemed guests. But these young women shone, and it was amazing to listen to them recount their experiences, what they stood for and how they helped their community.

Women have a very important place in the Irish community, and we strive to make it as welcoming as possible. It was only in the year 2002 that a woman was given the title of Grand Marshal for the Montreal Saint-Patrick's Day parade. But more and more, we see women take important roles in the heart of the community. Again, in the United Irish Societies of Montreal, more than half of the Executive members are women, including the president, Lori Morrison.

The courage, passion, and dedication of the young women who took part in this year's event reflect the vibrant and dynamic spirit of the Irish diaspora in Montreal. Their contributions, alongside those of countless others in the community, ensure that the legacy of this historic event remains alive and relevant for future generations.

References:

Noël, Julie. *Le défilé de la Saint-Patrick de Montréal*. Encyclopédie du MEM. June 02 2017.

<https://ville.montreal.qc.ca/memoiresdesmontrealais/le-defile-de-la-saint-patrick-de-montreal>.

Les photos de l'évènement sont tirées de la page Facebook des United Societies of Montreal

<https://www.facebook.com/uismtl>.



2024 Queen Selection Event participants



2024 Queen Selection Event judges



2024 Queen Selection Event scrutineers

Board of directors

Fergus Keyes | President

Fergus Keyes, proudly 100% Irish, was born and raised in Montreal. After a successful career in senior management within Canada's private security industry, Fergus transitioned to academia, earning a Chartered Director designation with a specialization in Board Governance from McMaster University and the DeGroote School of Business.

Fergus has extensive experience serving on non-profit Boards. His leadership roles include Chairman of the Centaur Theatre, Chairman of the Unified Board overseeing three CHSLDs (Father Dowd, St. Margaret's, and St. Andrew's), and Secretary of the Board for Alzheimer's Montreal. Currently, he serves on the Board of the Quebec Anglo Heritage Network and other organizations.

In addition to his governance work, Fergus has dedicated significant efforts to heritage preservation. He is actively involved in restoring an old Irish cemetery in Saint-Colomban, Quebec, and for over a decade, he has been a driving force behind the Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation. This project seeks to create a world-class memorial space around the Black Rock, commemorating Irish history and the Great Hunger.

Fergus has delivered approximately 50 presentations to diverse audiences, including community groups, elected officials, and media, advocating for the Black Rock project and garnering widespread support for this vital initiative.



Scott Phelan | Treasurer



Scott is a 6th generation Irish Quebecer whose ancestors hail from just outside Kilkenny in Ireland and whose family emigrated to Canada in the 1820s and settled in a community near Mirabel north of Montreal called St. Columban. A graduate of Loyola High School and Concordia University, Scott was a well known entrepreneur in Montreal owning and operating a small chain of five car stereo and car accessory stores in the 1980s as well as a consumer electronics retail store called La Boutique Electronique and five Bell independently contracted Bell retail outlets from the early 1990s until his retirement in 2014.

Scott has been an active volunteer serving in many senior positions in not-for-profit organizations such as the Loyola High School Alumni Association (President 1999- 2003), the Independent Communications Dealer Association of Canada (President and Chairman 2004-2011), the St. Patrick's Society of Montreal (President 2016 to 2018), the St. Patrick's Development Foundation (St. Patrick's Square) and of course as Director of the Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation since 2020 and as its Treasurer and President of its Finance and Fundraising Committee. He continues to work as a consultant for small businesses in the Montreal area and is married with three grown children and two grandchildren.

Board of directors

Lynn Lonergan Doyle | Secretary

Born in Buckingham, Quebec, Lynn has spent her adult life in Montreal where she received a Bachelor of Education degree from the University of Montreal and an Honours English degree from Loyola College. After teaching for several years, Lynn and her husband Paul Doyle, started a fundraising business which she ran until she retired.

After her two sons graduated from Loyola High School, Lynn was invited to join the Board of Governors of the school. She also served on the Parent's Committee of Villa Maria High School where her daughter graduated.

Lynn has been active in the Montreal Irish community ever since joining the St. Patrick's Society of Montreal. While there, she started the St. Patrick's Society Christmas Concert and founded Cine Gael Montreal. In 1999, Lynn became the first woman president of the St. Patrick's Society.

She served on the board of the St. Patrick's Square Foundation for twelve years and is proud to be a Warden of St. Patrick's Basilica.



Vivian Doyle-Kelly | Director

Vivian Doyle-Kelly arrived in Canada in the 1980's armed with a Chartered Accountant designation and a Masters degree in Economics from Trinity College Dublin. His initial reason for crossing the pond was a two-year assignment with Touche Ross (now Deloitte). He has remained in Canada ever since.



Upon completing his assignment with Touche Ross, Vivian enjoyed a successful career in the industrial distribution sector as President of MBS Bearing Service, during which time MBS earned the distinction of being recognized as one of Canada's 50 Best Managed Private Companies prior to its successful sale. Believing in the principle that "Green is good for business" he went on to found the energy efficiency services company, Eco-Watt Inc., delivering guaranteed cash-flow for clients while reducing the use of natural resources. Subsequent to Eco-Watt he has held Executive and Financial C-level positions in the manufacturing, aerospace, mining and metal sectors typically developing entrepreneurial, owner-managed companies.

In 2019, Vivian and his spouse, Marlene founded Épices & Tout, a gourmet food boutique located in Vieux-Longueuil which specializes in high-quality, artisanal food products made in Quebec, strongly supporting the development of this sector.

Currently he acts as Chief Financial Officer in the HRVST Limited group of companies bringing his passion for growing entrepreneurial, owner-managed companies to the nascent field of Controlled-Environment Agriculture.

A strong believer in community organizations, Vivian has devoted many hours to the voluntary sector, serving as CFO of the Montreal YMCA, National President and National Treasurer of The Kidney Foundation of Canada, as well as President of the Ireland-Canada Chamber of Commerce in Montreal. In 2002, he was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee medal for volunteer service in Canada.

With Marlene, he now divides his time between Montreal and the Eastern Townships and follows his son Christopher's career as a specialist in Emergency Room Medicine and Wilderness Medicine in Vancouver and his step-daughters' dynamic careers in Toronto.



Kelley O'Rourke | Director

Born in Montreal, Kelley O'Rourke holds a BA from Concordia University, a Landscape Design certificate from Guelph University, and an MSc. in Geography, Urban, and Environmental Studies from Concordia University. A retired Landscape Designer, she spent many years shaping both commercial and residential properties.

Her interests include family, genealogy, history, reading, traveling, and sports. Kelley is the proud mother of five adult children, who reside across Canada and France, and the grandmother to seven active grandsons.

A passionate advocate for Irish heritage, Kelley dedicates her time to preserving and promoting Irish history. She works in collaboration with many groups, giving presentations and conducting interviews on the promotion of Irish history and the importance of preserving the historical integrity of cemeteries. Whether collaborating on research projects for institutions like the McCord Museum, conducting interviews for documentaries, or fundraising for family history societies, she believes these contributions are invaluable for future generations. As a member of the St. Columban Irish, Kelley was part of a volunteer team that successfully restored an Irish cemetery with headstones dating back to 1836.

She is currently president of the Canadian Irish Migration Preservation Network (CIMPN), where she has been instrumental in promoting Irish heritage and history. Kelley helped bring the Global Famine Way Bronze Shoes to Saint-Colomban, strengthening the ties between local heritage and the broader global narrative of the Irish Famine. She continues to lead efforts to research and promote Irish heritage in Canada and globally, while building a dynamic network of individuals and groups with similar goals. Kelley is proud to be one of the directors of the Montreal Irish Black Rock Memorial Park Foundation team, playing an active role in helping realize the vision of a world-class Famine memorial park.

Christopher Deehy | Director

Christopher Deehy has been practicing labor and employment law since 1995.

He holds a Masters Degree in industrial relations and is a member of the Professional Corporation of Industrial Relations Consultants. He is also a certified mediator. He represents corporate clients before all civil and administrative labor tribunals. He advises employers in all matters relating to employment relationships with their employees, whether they be unionized or not, including health and safety issues, collective bargaining, labor relations, sexual or psychological harassment complaints, discrimination, etc.

Christopher is also acting as counsel for the Quebec-Ireland Committee and was an international observer to the Orange Order Parades in 1999.



Our members

Our newest member



Kevin Callahan | Board member of the Saint Patrick's Society of Montreal and board member of Sinn Féin Canada

Kevin Callahan is a dedicated educator, human rights advocate, and community leader with a remarkable career spanning over four decades. A retired Faculty Lecturer and Senior Program Coordinator at McGill University, Kevin directed intensive language programs serving over 1,000 students annually, while mentoring a team of 34 instructors. His leadership extended to negotiating collective agreements and contributing to strategic planning. Beyond academia, Kevin has a rich history of activism, from organizing solidarity efforts with the United Farm Workers Union in the 1970s to championing Irish heritage and justice through his work with the Quebec-Ireland Committee and Friends of Sinn Féin Canada. His expertise in advocacy, media relations, and networking has left a lasting impact on both local and international communities.

Currently, Kevin serves on the boards of the Saint Patrick's Society of Montreal and Friends of Sinn Féin Canada, continuing his lifelong commitment to education, cultural preservation, and social justice.

Danny Doyle | Grand Marshal 200 th St. Patrick's Parade

Born in Griffintown, the sixth of twelve children to Muriel and Daniel Doyle, Danny traces his Irish ancestry back to his forebearers James Doyle and Mary Coffey who settled in Griffintown in the early 1900s. Danny spent his formative years in Griffintown before moving to Pointe St. Charles, where he met and married Cathy Ross. Together, they later made their home in Verdun, where they raised their three sons, Danny Jr., Shawn, and Brandon. After retiring from CN after 46 years of dedicated service, Danny and Cathy now treasure every moment spent with their growing family as proud grandparents to Emma, Quinn, Danny, and Penelope.

The St. Patrick's Parade has always held a special place in Danny's life, celebrating his Irish heritage as a participant in St. Ann's Parish marching unit, volunteering as a Deputy Marshal, and eventually leading the Parade as President of the United Irish Societies of Montreal (UIS) in 2016 and 2017. He was bestowed the honour of Chief Reviewing Officer in 2012.

Throughout his life, Danny has served his community with dedication and passion. He currently leads the Erin Sports Association as its President. His influence extends further as a Member of the Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation, a role through which he actively contributes to preserving Irish heritage.

His volunteer efforts include supporting Sister Diana's food bank at St. Gabriel's Parish, serving on the UIS executive committee overseeing nominations and sitting on the Past Presidents Advisory committee. He is a long-time member of the Knights of Columbus. He also served as the treasurer for the Pointe St. Charles Hall of Recognition, among numerous other contributions, including as volunteer football coach with the Verdun Minor Football Association, and a member of St. Gabriel's Parish's Gary Clahane Memorial Golf Tournament organizing committee, among other charitable endeavors.

Danny is regarded as a pillar of the Irish community, and many would call him an icon. His deep-rooted dedication to service and leadership has not gone unnoticed, and it is with great pride that he has been named the Grand Marshal of the 200th Montreal St. Patrick's Parade—a fitting recognition for his lasting contributions.



Ken Quinn | Past-president, St. Patrick's Society of Montreal, Past-president, United Irish Societies of Montreal

Ken Quinn has been named by the United Irish Societies as the recipient of the 2025 Liam Daly Heritage Award in recognition of his commitment to promoting Montreal's Irish history and sharing his knowledge. His community involvement spans organizations like the United Irish Societies and St. Patrick's Society, where he held leadership roles including President. Additionally, he serves as historian for the United Irish Societies. Professionally, Ken is an Asset Analyst at Future Electronics, showcasing his dedication both in his career and community. He has been recognized for his contributions to NDG Minor Baseball, displaying his commitment to youth development, and by the Erin Sports Association who named him Irishman of the Year for 2024. Beyond this, he's a member of various organizations, including the Innisfail Social and Sports Club, Royal Canadian Legion Branch #4, and the Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation.

Dr. Jane McGaughey | Associate Professor & Johnson Chair in Quebec and Canadian Irish Studies, School of Irish Studies, Concordia University

Jane G. V. McGaughey holds the Johnson Chair of Québec and Canadian Irish Studies until 2026. She began her tenure at Concordia's School of Irish Studies in 2012 as an Assistant Professor focusing on Irish Diaspora Studies. McGaughey earned her Ph.D. from Birkbeck College, University of London in 2008. Her latest book, "Violent Loyalties: Manliness, Migration, and the Irish in Canada, 1798-1841," came out in 2020, exploring Irish male migration to Canada and the role violence played in shaping their lives. Before joining Concordia, McGaughey taught at the Royal Military College of Canada and was a National Endowment for the Humanities Faculty Fellow at the University of Notre Dame. Her current research focuses on the medical treatment of 19th-century immigrant mothers, and the confinement of some of these women in colonial lunatic asylums. Since 2022, she has hosted "The Irish in Canada" podcast, delving into the lives of Irish immigrants and their Canadian descendants. Episodes are available on various platforms and the podcast's website. <https://theirishincanadapodcast.ca/>



Paul Dunne | Past-President, Ireland-Canadian Chamber of Commerce, Past-president, St. Patrick's Society of Montreal

A Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland and a Canadian CPA, Paul Dunne has been a Montreal resident since the late 1970s. After working briefly as controller of a real estate development company, he joined Alcan Aluminium Limited in Montreal initially in charge of global consolidation of the financial results and later as manager of financial planning for the Alcan group. He taught advanced accounting in the CA program in McGill University for ten years and guest-lectured in the MBA programs in McGill, Concordia and HEC. After leaving Alcan, Paul joined Domfoam International as CFO. In 1994, he left to found Eircan (now JPDO), an independent accounting firm providing cloud-based support to small businesses.

Paul has been engaged in volunteer activity since he arrived in Montreal, principally with the YMCA where he served as board chair in Montreal and vice-chair of YMCA Canada and St. Patrick's Society where he served in many capacities, most recently as President. He was President of the Ireland-Canada Chamber of Commerce from 2021 to 2023.

Kevin Tracey | Immediate Past-president, United Irish Societies of Montreal

Kevin Tracey has been in the IT/Data management industry for over 30 years. Specializing in Enterprise Architecture, development, Big Data technologies, Business Intelligence, Data Management, Data Warehousing, and Cloud Development & Architecture Teams, Kevin Tracey brings a robust background in technical, software, and data architectures, along with operational skills. Beyond his professional achievements, Kevin is deeply involved in Montreal's Irish community. He has held significant roles in the United Irish Societies of Montreal, including President, VP of Advertising and Public Relations, and Assistant Parade Director for the Montreal St-Patrick's Day Parade over the past 20 years. His dedication to promoting Irish arts and culture within the community is evident through his extensive volunteer work. Kevin is also very active in his local community by residing over Dorval Soccer club as their president for 15 years as well as coaching over that tenure. Also, a member of the Dorval Oldtimers Hall of Fame (inducted in 2024) a league he has played in the league for the past 22 years and has been on the organizing committee for the Dorval Oldtimers charity tournament for the past 10 years.



Rick Grant | President, The Irish Protestant Benevolent Society of Montreal

Rick Grant, Vice President of the Irish Protestant Benevolent Society (IPBS), brings over three decades of experience from C.H. Robinson, a global logistics leader. During his tenure they oversaw \$22 billion in freight under management and facilitated 19 million shipments annually. Since retiring in 2015, he has been an active volunteer, overseeing membership and liaising with The Montreal Irish Monument Park. Despite being the only non-Irish member on the IPBS board, Rick's dedication is evident through both professional and personal connections, including his wife's Irish heritage. His journey with IPBS began through a friendship forged in junior hockey with Mike Nelson, illustrating Rick's commitment to community engagement and his seamless integration into IPBS upon retirement.

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