

BRIEF NEWS FROM THE SCHOOL OF IRISH STUDIES



In 2019-20, 22 courses are being offered in nine subjects, such as History, Literature, Geography, Economics, Theatre, Film, Music, and Language. Examples include “Irish Cultural Traditions in Quebec,” “The Irish in Montreal,” “The Irish Economy and the European Union,” and “Contemporary Landscapes, Literatures and Cultures.”



Professor **John McCourt**, a world-renowned James Joyce expert, is the **Peter O’Brien Visiting Scholar** for 2019. He has been teaching courses on Joyce’s *Ulysses* as well as a course entitled “Highlights of Irish Literature.” McCourt also gave a public lecture on the reception of *Ulysses* in Ireland.

Students in Irish Studies can now avail themselves of opportunities to study in Ireland through the various academic exchange agreements Concordia University has with **University College Dublin, University College Cork, Technological University Dublin, Dublin City University, National University of Ireland, Galway** and **National University of Ireland, Maynooth**.

Montreal’s **Irish Protestant Benevolent Society** has generously funded a \$5,000 scholarship for a student in the School to enrol in an advanced course in Irish Studies at Queen’s University Belfast in summer 2020.

Because of the partnership between the **Canadian Irish Studies Foundation** and **Concordia University**, the School of Irish Studies is in the process of hiring a permanent professor specializing in the Irish language and its cultures. To begin next summer, the appointment is a major step forward for the School and will greatly contribute to a consolidation of its academic reputation around the world.



For ten years, the School has partnered with the **Ireland Canada University Foundation (ICUF)** in promoting the Irish language and its rich culture among students. Scholarships have been provided to 24 students to take summer courses in the Connemara Gaeltacht offered by the **National University of Ireland, Galway**. In addition, this partnership has brought an Irish-language teacher to the School each year to teach year-long courses in the Irish language. The current Teagascóir Gaelige, **Gemma Lambe**, a native of Dublin, is teaching introductory and intermediate Irish.



After the death of **Gus O’Gorman** in 2016, his widow, **Karin Austin**, along with many family members and friends, raised funds to create the **Gus O’Gorman Irish Language Scholarship**. Along with support from the **Ireland Canada University Foundation**, the scholarship sends a top-level Irish-language student to study in Connemara each summer.

The recipient this past summer was **Miles Murphy**, who was also the recipient of the Faculty of Arts and Science Scholars Award, having ranked in the top 1% for the 2018-19 academic year at Concordia.

Miles and Gemma Lambe both coordinate an informal Irish-language learning group, *Caife Gaelach*, which meets each Thursday at Shaughnessy Café. Whether you know Irish or have some knowledge of the language, you are very welcome to join this convivial social occasion.

Tá Fáilte Romhat!



Canadian Irish Studies Foundation





SUPPORT NEXT-GENERATION STUDENTS IN IRISH STUDIES

Taking a break from their studies in the Fr. Thomas McEntee Reading Room are, from left to right: Kay Nguyen (undergraduate), Christopher Byrne (undergraduate), Giselle Gonzalez (MA), Kyle McCreanor (MA), Evan Clarke (undergraduate), Kelly Lamb (undergraduate), Rebecca Stacey (MA), Emerald Hutton (undergraduate).

HELP US TO EMPOWER STUDENTS TO PURSUE THEIR DREAMS.

Please help us with our capital campaign. Donations of all amounts are greatly appreciated.

Your donation will help the School of Irish Studies offer larger scholarships to students, extend the Peter O’Brien Visiting Scholar to a full academic year and help with the expansion of badly-needed facilities for the School. Thank you in advance. *Go Raibh Mile Maith Agat.*

Did you know: It is possible to donate appreciated stocks, bonds and mutual funds and take advantage of the best tax benefits — it is more advantageous to transfer securities directly to the foundation than to liquidate them in order to make a donation.

Concordia has embarked on its most ambitious fundraising effort ever. Discover why we’re leading THE CAMPAIGN FOR CONCORDIA. Visit concordia.ca/campaign.



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Canadian Irish Studies Foundation

FUNDAMENTALS



Concordia thanks Foundation for extraordinary support

From left to right: Marie Johnson, Philippe Johnson, Diane Johnson, Pierre-Marc Johnson, Jacques Johnson, Jean Charest, Daniel Johnson Jr., Pamela McGovern, Brian Mulroney, Graham Carr, Rhona Richman Kenneally, Michael Kenneally, Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin, Paul Chesser



The Foundation’s chairperson and trustees wish all its supporters a happy Christmas and good luck in 2020!

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CANADIAN IRISH STUDIES FOUNDATION FUNDAMENTALS

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10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF SCHOOL OF IRISH STUDIES AND JOHNSON CHAIR



At a gathering of major supporters of the Canadian Irish Studies Foundation (CISF), Concordia's interim president and vice chancellor, Graham Carr, thanked donors, members of the Irish diaspora and other communities for encouraging the development of Irish Studies over the years.

Among the guests were former premiers Jean Charest, Daniel Johnson Jr., Pierre-Marc Johnson and former prime minister Brian Mulroney. Also attending were Jacques Johnson, youngest brother of former premier Daniel Johnson Sr.; Diane Johnson and



Peter O'Brien, Founding Chair

Marie Johnson, sisters of Daniel Johnson Jr.; and his son, Philippe Johnson.

As well as acknowledging the financial support provided by the CISF over more than 25 years, the evening was also a celebration of the 10th anniversary of the founding of the School of Irish Studies and the creation of the Johnson Chair in Quebec and Canadian Irish Studies.

Graham Carr, Concordia's interim president, thanked the CISF for its extraordinary support since the mid-1990s, emphasizing the unique partnership that evolved to the benefit of thousands of students and engagement with the Irish community. In acknowledging the growth of Irish Studies from very tentative first steps, he thanked the School's co-founders, Rhona Richman Kenneally and Michael Kenneally, for their vision, perseverance and years of hard work. He drew particular attention to their success in marshalling community support for what was an ambitious project and then working assiduously to establish the School as a world-class centre for the study of Ireland and the Irish diaspora.



Mary Gallery, City of Westmount Councillor and daughter of Emeritus Chair Brian O'Neill Gallery



Attendees at the reception and documentary excerpt screening

In welcoming guests and introducing the evening's events, CISF chair Pamela McGovern outlined some of the achievements of the School and spoke of the successful partnership between it, Concordia and the CISF. She emphasized the Foundation's pride in providing ongoing financial support to students, funding events such as a public lecture series and partnering with Concordia to share the costs of visiting professors and permanent faculty.

In his remarks, former premier Jean Charest spoke with pride of his Irish lineage and the outsized role Quebecers of Irish heritage have played in shaping Quebec and Canadian society. He suggested that some of Brian Mulroney's accomplishments as prime minister, namely his ability to address issues with sympathy and imagination, could be attributed to his Irish heart.

Charest went on to say how pleased he was as premier of Quebec to provide partnership funding with Concordia University to finance the establishment of the Johnson Chair in Quebec and

Canadian Irish Studies. The inaugural holder of the Johnson Chair, professor Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin, then gave an overview of his research on the deep roots of the Irish all over the province and the welcome they were given by francophones as they integrated into Quebec society.

Ó hAllmhuráin provided some background on an excerpt of his documentary *Lost Children of the Carricks*, which traces the story of the survivors of an 1847 Famine shipwreck in the St. Lawrence, when 48 passengers out of 173 managed

to make it ashore. The film chronicles the survivors' settlement in the Gaspé region over five generations and the return of their descendants to Ireland in 2015 to meet cousins who did not know of their existence. A full-length screening of the documentary film will be held at Concordia on January 24, 2020.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN FOR \$500,000 BEGINS



From left to right: Patrick Shea, Vice-Chair, CISF; Pamela McGovern, Chair, CISF; former Quebec Premier Jean Charest; Graham Carr, Interim President, Concordia University; Rhona Richman Kenneally, Co-founder, School of Irish Studies; Michael Kenneally, Co-founder, School of Irish Studies

Pamela McGovern has announced that the Foundation is seeking to raise \$500,000 so that ongoing support can be provided to increase scholarships for students, extend the term of the Peter O'Brien Visiting Scholar and assist in the expansion of badly-needed space for the School of Irish Studies.

In announcing the campaign, the CISF chair said she was delighted to report that approximately \$80,000 has already been raised. A fundraising committee of CISF trustees is now planning for the main part of the campaign. McGovern encouraged those who are able to provide support to the best of their abilities.

At a recent meeting, she said: "In this rapidly changing and deeply challenging world, I am convinced more than ever that education is the key to a better future. I firmly believe that educated and informed individuals become the building blocks of a society that is sensitive and responsive to the well-being of all its members. Education can transform the lives of students in beneficial and

permanent ways during formative years when they are shaping their identities and searching for their places in the world. The School of Irish Studies helps with this process and that is why I believe it is worthy of all our support."

McGovern also encourages readers to become familiar with the extraordinary range of activities offered by the School, not just for younger students but mature students as well, many of whom audit courses on a regular basis. The School offers approximately 25 courses each year on a diverse range of subjects and hosts a public lecture series with fascinating speakers.

McGovern emphasized that the long-standing relationship between Concordia and the Irish community allowed for the creation of the School of Irish Studies, which is now one of the permanent and central Irish institutional centres in Montreal. The Father Thomas McEntee Reading Room and Library is regularly used by various Irish associations for meetings and is the



heart of Irish Studies for students, providing a quiet oasis for study and collaboration within the larger university.

To ensure the future of Irish Studies at Concordia, CISF Chair McGovern asks readers to consider supporting this vibrant educational institution. See the back page of the newsletter for donation information.