

Biographies of 2017 Eastchester Iris-American Social Club St. Patrick's Day Parade Honorees

Caroline O'Connell

This honoree is one of twelve siblings born in Taughmaconnell, County Roscommon. Not one to sit still, O'Connell completed her undergraduate studies at University College Galway before immigrating to the U.S. in 1987. While living in the Bronx, she continued her education at Fordham University and completed a Master's Degree in Guidance Counseling, her current vocation, which she practices at North Rockland High School. She married Peter O'Connell of Inch, County Kerry in 1995 and they have three children: Martin, Bríd and Pierce. The O'Connell family moved to Eastchester in 2004 and joined the Eastchester Irish-American Social Club (EIASC) in 2005. By far, one of the most indefatigable members of the EIASC, O'Connell has handled many Christmas parties, picnics and St. Patrick's Day festivals. She also successfully ran the first club Halloween Costume Party, collaborating with Breda Travers and Elaine McGettigan. Her motto is: Life is not a sprint, it's a marathon.

Nancy Heffernan

Originally of Evansburg, Pennsylvania, Nancy attended St. Francis College where she met her husband Mike. Upon their graduation, they moved to New York and Heffernan started work as a registered nurse at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, where she currently works. The Heffernan's married in 1990 and moved to Eastchester in 1994 where they have raised three children: Maggie, Olivia and Jack. At the behest of their good friends, the Murtagh's, they joined the Eastchester Irish-American Social Club in 1995. Over the years, fun-loving Heffernan ran several Halloween parties, always dressed in a creative costume. She also was active in the St. Patrick's Day Festival, especially the Raffle Committee, and club Christmas parties. Equally active in the community, Heffernan has been a board member of the Eastchester PTA and the Eastchester Environmental Committee. Her family hails from County Galway. Proud of her Irish heritage, she often quotes her grandmother, Edna Mae Dower-Knorr, who said, "What are you if you are not Irish? The answer, ashamed."

Margaret Reynolds Stapleton

Stapleton was born in the Bronx to Morris Reynolds of County Leitrim and Mary Theresa Irwin of County Mayo. A proud graduate of Bronx High School of Science, Meg completed her education at Hunter College and the College of New Rochelle, attaining her degree in nursing. She works as a registered nurse at White Plains Hospital and is certified as an Operating Room Nurse. After moving to Eastchester in August 1997, Stapleton raised three kids: Elizabeth, Owen and Jack. She joined the Eastchester Irish-American Social Club (EIASC) in 2001. Confirming her decision to join EIASC as the right one, Stapleton won a Waterford Crystal vase at her first club event. Always eager to help this club, Stapleton chaired Halloween parties and several club picnics. Always up for St. Patrick's Day, she has been a fixture at the snack table located at the end of the parade route. A longstanding EIASC board member, Meg served as a Recording Secretary. Among the many good memories Stapleton has had with EIASC, one of her favorites is meeting Mary Denning, a former EIASC St. Pat's Day Grand Marshal and supporter of the importance of education, for the first time at one of the club's Christmas Party.