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Irish America magazine - April/May '08 issue: Top 100 Irish Americans, The Greening of Silicon Valley, The Chieftains of Endurance, The Mighty Moran Clan, Emotional return to Belfast for Liam, The Maras and the Rooneys, Irish Eye on Hollywood, Music & Book Reviews

The Mighty Morans
From priests to centerfolds, the Moran clan have produced some very interesting folk.

The Greening of Silicon Valley
Scan the upper ranks of some of Silicon Valley's powerhouses and you'll find Irish names

Irish American of the Year
Tom Moran has brought aid to Africa and peace in Northern Ireland.

MAGAZINE ISSUES
Irish America Home
Oct/Nov 2008
Aug/Sept 2008
June/July 2008
Apr/May 2008
Feb/Mar 2008
Dec 2007/Jan 2008

Select Archive Issue
Oct/Nov 2007

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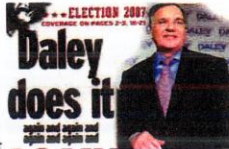
Top 100 Irish America's Finest Politics and Public Services

"You go out there and ask them what their future is today. If we don't build that today, there's nothing"
- Richard M. Daley, Mayor of Chicago.

In the following pages we honor those who spend their lives serving their country through politics and public service and see it as a duty to help ensure that the American dream is within reach of all those who live in this great land.

Mayor Richard M. Daley

On election night 2007, Richard M. Daley took the stage at Chicago's Hilton & Towers holding the hand of his cancer-surviving wife, Maggie, and ready to eclipse his father as the city's longest-serving mayor. What would his father, Richard J. Daley, who served 21 years, think about Daley winning a term that will take him to 22 years in office by 2011?



"I think my dad would be very proud of me," Daley said in an interview at the party. "So would my mom. And Kevin." Daley often mentions his son Kevin, who died of Spina Bifida at age 2 in 1981.

Daley's family has been through a lot during this term, with Maggie surviving breast cancer, Daley himself coming down with heart problems, his son Patrick joining the army to fight in Iraq, and his daughter Nora giving him two grandchildren.

Elected mayor of Chicago in 1989 to complete the term of Harold Washington, Daley stepped into his job with a name that carried high expectations. During his almost 20 years as mayor he has exceeded those expectations. He has earned a national reputation for his innovative, community-based programs to address education, public safety, neighborhood development and other challenges facing American cities. In fact, Daley "is widely viewed as the nation's top urban executive" (Time magazine, 2005). The former state senator and county prosecutor who has been re-elected five times by overwhelming margins, continues to improve the city, investing more than \$3 billion toward more than 125,000 affordable housing units and establishing aggressive plans to rebuild public housing, extend affordability and end homelessness in Chicago.

He is also supporting the plan by Dublin-born Garrett Kelleher to build a 2,000-foot-high skyscraper in Chicago. The building, known as the Chicago Spire, with 150 floors, will stand taller than Chicago's Sears Tower as well as New York's upcoming Freedom Tower, to become North America's tallest free-standing structure and the world's tallest all-residential building. The Spire, which if completed as scheduled in 2011, will mark Daley's 22nd year in office.

His efforts to improve the city have most certainly paid off as the city of Chicago is currently favored by the U.S. Olympic Committee to host the 2016 Olympic Games. Still, all is not completely rosy for the mayor, and as the City undergoes an investigation into an allegedly fraudulent hiring system, Daley's office is coming under increased scrutiny.

Daley grew up on the South Side of Chicago, the fourth of seven children of the late Richard J. and his wife Eleanor. He holds a law degree from DePaul University and began his public service career in 1969 when he was elected to the Illinois Constitutional Convention. Mayor Daley lives in the South Loop neighborhood of Chicago with his wife. They have three children, Nora Daley Conroy, Patrick Daley and Elizabeth Daley.

Ambassador Tom Foley

With the emphasis shifting from political stability to the economy in Northern Ireland, and the Celtic Tiger cooling down in the Irish Republic, U.S. Ambassador Tom Foley, a graduate of Harvard Business School, with 25 years of management and investment experience, is the right man for the job.

On the phone from Dublin with Irish America in February, Foley talked about Northern Ireland and the idea that political stability is enhanced when the economy is good and unemployment rates are low. "We have moved into that mode and we had an investment mission that Ambassador Tuttle [U.S. Ambassador to the U.K.] and I sponsored up there in October. And now we're preparing for the larger U.S. Northern Ireland investment conference in Belfast on May 8 and 9," he said.



Having a business background, Foley has more understanding than your average

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over from County Antrim in the early 18th century. It has recently been confirmed by DNA testing that on his father's side as well, the McCain family came from north County Antrim, not far from Dunluce. They settled in Mississippi. Several of the Mississippi McCains are quite interested in their Irish heritage, learning Gaelic and spending time in Ireland, and one of them is pursuing a Ph.D. in Irish history. Senator McCain himself is an avid reader of contemporary Irish literature, citing Roddy Doyle and William Trevor as favorites.

McCain remains a strong advocate for new immigration laws and campaign finance reform. His life experience as well as his veteran status makes him a popular choice, and he will prove a worthy adversary to whomever wins the Democratic nomination.

John McCain lives in Phoenix with his wife Cindy and their four children Jimmy, Bridget, Jack and Meghan.

Barack Obama

He is a leading Democratic candidate for the presidential election in November, Illinois Senator Barack Obama has built his campaign platform on hope and change. If successful, Obama will be the first man of African descent to inhabit the White House. He will not, however, be the first man of Irish ancestry to occupy the position.



Though it may come as a surprise to many, Obama can trace Irish ancestry on his mother's side back to one Falmouth Kearney from Monegall, County Offaly, whose father was a shoemaker. According to Church of Ireland rector Canon Stephen Neill whose investigation into Obama's Irish roots was prompted by a request from an Americans for Obama group based in Dublin, Falmouth emigrated to New York in the 1850s at the age of 19.

Falmouth's daughter Mary Ann Kearney, born in Tipton County, Indiana in 1869, married Jacob William Dunham, of Kempton, Indiana. The couple moved to Wichita, Kansas, where their great-granddaughter, Barack Obama's mother Ann Dunham, was born in 1942.

Barack Obama himself was born in Hawaii, where his mother's parents had moved and where she attended college and met Obama's father, Barack Hussein Obama from Kenya. The couple divorced when Obama was two. Obama was educated at Columbia University. In 1991 he graduated from Harvard Law School where he was the first African-American president of the Harvard Law Review. In January of 2005 he was sworn into office as state senator in Illinois.

Obama's campaign remains strong in America, but the senator also has the support of the tiny Irish town of Offaly where locals celebrated the senator's victory in the Iowa caucus. Standing outside of Ollie Hayes's pub, American Democratic activists led locals in the signature Obama cheer, "Fired Up! Ready to Go!"

Barack Obama lives on the South Side of Chicago with his wife Michelle and their two daughters Malia and Sasha.

Patrick Murphy

Patrick J. Murphy (D-PA) is the first veteran of the Iraq war to serve in Congress. He has been representing Pennsylvania's 8th Congressional District since November 2006. Murphy joined the Army in 1993 and became a West Point professor, a JAG Corps attorney, and served in both Bosnia (2002) and Iraq (2003-2004) post 9/11.



In Iraq he served as a paratrooper with the 82nd Airborne Division. During his service he earned a Bronze Star and his unit was awarded a Presidential Unit Citation. Murphy sits on both the House Armed Services Committee and the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. He opposed a troop increase in Iraq in 2007, and with fellow Democrats Senator Barack Obama and Congressman Mike Thompson, cosponsored the Iraq War De-Escalation Act of 2007.

This year, after the New York Giants' surprise win in the Super Bowl, Murphy showed his hometown loyalty when he was the only congressman to vote against a resolution congratulating the Big Blue saying, "As a former 700-level security guard and lifelong Eagles fan, I couldn't, in good conscience, vote for the New York Giants. The only thing worse would have been a resolution honoring the Dallas Cowboys."

Murphy is married to Jennifer and has a daughter Maggie, born in 2006. His father is a Philadelphia police officer and his mother is a career legal secretary.

Tim Murphy

Tim Murphy (R-PA), U.S. Congressman for the 18th District of Pennsylvania since 2002, is one of the few health care professionals in Congress. A psychologist by trade, he served at a number of hospitals in the Pittsburgh area, including Pittsburgh Children's Hospital, before his election to the state senate in 1997.



One of 11 children, born to a Polish mother and an Irish-American father, Murphy grew up in a rural area of Ohio. "There was not much money, but we never knew we didn't have it," says Murphy, who worked his way through college. Upon leaving school, he became a practicing psychologist and a professor at the University