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## **Irish-Americans in Law**

Brendan McCarthy, Domhnall Ó’Catháin, and Eric Fitzsimmons

“The first thing we do, let’s kill all the lawyers.”<sup>1</sup> This quote from Shakespeare’s *Henry VI* was actually a compliment to the legal profession – without laws and without lawyers to protect the rights and liberties of individuals, there cannot be a civilized society. Lawyers can try cases in court, negotiate contracts or offer legal advice on business matters. Lawyers can work in the private sector or in the public sector as prosecutors, judges or politicians. Without all of these different types of lawyers, our system of government could not function.

In the United States, we are fortunate to have a democratic government and a strong legal system. Irish Americans have played a large role in shaping and strengthening that legal system. Following is a brief account of how Irish Americans have left their mark in the New York-New Jersey area through personal achievement and collective action.

### **Law in New Jersey**

#### **State Law Enforcement**

Since immigrating to the United States, many Irish Americans have joined the ranks of law enforcement. In New Jersey, each county has its own prosecutor’s office and public defender’s office. The New Jersey Attorney General’s Office is the state prosecutorial organization. The main offices for the New Jersey Attorney General (Department of Law and Public Safety) and the Office of the Public Defender are both in the Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex – named after the former Irish-American Governor of New Jersey – in Trenton, New

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, *The Norton Shakespeare* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997), p. 266.

Jersey. Throughout the years, many Irish Americans have dedicated their careers to working in these organizations for the citizens in their jurisdictions.

The Essex County Prosecutor's Office, the largest prosecutor's office in the state, is where one of New Jersey's most well-known governors, Brendan Byrne, served as the Prosecutor from 1959 to 1968. After his serving as the Prosecutor, Byrne was then appointed to the bench as a Superior Court Judge in Essex County from 1970 to 1973. Byrne then ran for governor in 1973, and won. He then won re-election in 1978, serving until 1982.<sup>2</sup> Governor Byrne's terms as governor are noted for his passage of the Pineland Protection Act, a piece of legislation that protected a large portion of the state's pinelands from future development, and the further development of the Meadowlands Sports Complex. Governor Byrne is still active today in the law firm he founded – Carella, Byrne, Cecchi, Olstein, Brady & Agnello – and as a columnist with New Jersey's newspaper, *The Star-Ledger*.

Many Irish Americans followed Governors Byrne's footsteps and began their legal career as Assistant Prosecutors in any of the county prosecutors' offices through the State. The current acting Essex County Prosecutor, Carolyn Murray, is of Irish descent.

## Federal Law Enforcement

The Department of Justice in Washington, D.C. is the department within the federal branch of the government tasked with the responsibility to prosecute violations of the federal criminal code. Throughout the country, separate U.S. Attorneys' Offices have attorneys that

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<sup>2</sup> "Brendan T. Byrne," *Carella Byrne*, accessed November 26, 2013, <http://www.carellabyrne.com/attorneys/b-byrne/>.

prosecute federal criminal cases within their jurisdiction. The State of New Jersey encompasses one federal district—the District of New Jersey—and the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of New Jersey has offices in Newark, Trenton and Camden.

From 1999 until 2002, the U.S. Attorney for the District of New Jersey was Irish-American attorney Robert J. Cleary. U.S. Attorney Cleary was most known for his prosecution of the Unabomber while Cleary served in the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of New York.<sup>3</sup> New Jersey’s current governor, Christopher J. Christie, then succeeded Cleary. Governor Christie, whose father is of Irish heritage, was the U.S. Attorney for the District of New Jersey from 2002 to 2008<sup>4</sup>. While Governor Christie was the U.S. Attorney, his office prosecuted several high-profile public corruption cases, including the prosecution of former Newark mayor Sharpe James in 2008.

## Law Firms

The most common places of employment for lawyers are law firms. New Jersey has many firms, which range from the large, international firms to the solo practitioner offices. New Jersey has its share of large, mid-sized and solo law firms, and Irish-Americans have made their mark in each category.

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<sup>3</sup> “Robert J Cleary,” *Proskauer*, accessed November 26, 2013, <http://www.proskauer.com/professionals/robert-cleary/>.

<sup>4</sup> “Governor Chris Christie,” *State of New Jersey*, accessed November 26, 2013, <http://www.state.nj.us/governor/admin/about/>.

Two of New Jersey's largest law firms – Gibbons and Connell Foley – have strong Irish roots. Gibbons, headquartered in Newark, is considered a mid-sized law firm, but with over two hundred lawyers, it is atop the list of the largest firms in New Jersey. Andrew Crummy originally founded Gibbons in 1926.<sup>5</sup> The firm then grew through the proceeding decades, and, in 1950 a graduate of Harvard Law School – John J. Gibbons – joined the firm.<sup>6</sup> After practicing with the firm for seventeen years, John Gibbons was appointed as a judge on the Third Circuit Court of Appeals.<sup>7</sup> Judge Gibbons then re-joined the firm in 1990 and the firm name was changed to Gibbons, Del Deo, Dolan, Griffinger & Vecchione.<sup>8</sup> In 2007, the firm shortened its name to Gibbons. Recently, the firm has expanded with offices in New York; Philadelphia; and Wilmington, Delaware.<sup>9</sup>

In 2002, Patrick C. Dunican, Jr., at the age of 37, was appointed managing partner of the firm.<sup>10</sup> Aside from his role as managing partner, Dunican is also on the board of trustees for the Irish American Bar Association of New Jersey. In 2011, Dunican was honored as Seton Hall Law School's Distinguished Alumnus of the year.<sup>11</sup>

Connell Foley, headquartered in Roseland, New Jersey, was founded in 1936. In the 1950's two attorneys with Irish roots, Walt Connell and Adrian Foley, joined the firm, and the

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<sup>5</sup> *Gibbons*, accessed November 26, 2013, <http://www.gibbonslaw.com/>.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

firm now bears their name. Also recognized as one of New Jersey's top law firms, the firm has expanded with offices in New York and Philadelphia.<sup>12</sup>

There are also numerous boutique law firms and solo practices founded by Irish-American attorneys in New Jersey. The firm Critchley, Kinum & Vazquez was originally founded in 1975 by one of New Jersey's top criminal defense attorneys, Michael Critchley. The firm specializes in white-collar criminal defense, securities litigation and complex business litigation. Critchley began his career as an Assistant Prosecutor with the Essex County Prosecutor's Office and later served as Assistant Counsel to Governor Brendan T. Byrne.<sup>13</sup> In 1986, Critchley coordinated the defense team in the federal trial of twenty-one members of the Lucchese crime family.<sup>14</sup> The trial was the longest federal trial at the time, and, in 1988, the defense team secured an acquittal for its clients. The trial is the subject of the book, *Boys from New Jersey* by Robert Rudolph. Many of the other lawyers on the defense team spearheaded by Critchley are still highly involved in the law, including the Honorable Peter V. Ryan who is now a judge on the Superior Court of New Jersey in Essex County.

Brian Neary is another top attorney in white-collar criminal law. Neary has offices in Hackensack and Hoboken. He is regarded as an expert in white-collar criminal law, non-white collar criminal law, and driving while intoxicated cases. Neary also frequently lectures, writes

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<sup>12</sup> *Connell Foley*, accessed November 26, 2013, <http://www.connellfoley.com/>.

<sup>13</sup> "Michael Critchley, Sr.," *Critchley, Kinum, & Vazquez, LLC.*, accessed November 26, 2013, <http://www.critchleylaw.com/critchletsr.html>.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

and appears on television as an expert in his fields of expertise. Further, Neary is on the board of trustees for the Irish American Bar Association of New Jersey.<sup>15</sup>

## Judges

New Jersey has a unique judicial system. Each county has a courthouse in the county seat – i.e., Morris County Courthouse is in Morristown and Essex County Courthouse is in Newark. The courthouses themselves can be majestic landmarks, such as the Old Courthouse in Newark, which was designed by the late Cass Gilbert, the architect for the United State Supreme Court in Washington, D.C.

The judiciary for each county is broken down into four categories: criminal, civil, family and chancery. It is unique for a state to have a separate chancery division where typically matters such as injunctions, wills and estates are decided.

There are many Irish-American judges throughout the state now, as there have been throughout the state's history. Many judges of Irish-American heritage have made an impact on the legal system, including the former state Supreme Court Justice Daniel J. O'Hern, who served on the New Jersey Supreme Court from 1981 to 2000.

Currently, on the federal bench, the Honorable Dennis M. Cavanaugh has sat on the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey since his appointment by President Clinton in 2000. Judge Cavanaugh is a New Jersey native who began his career as an Assistant Public Defender in Essex County and then moved to private practice where he practiced at law

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<sup>15</sup> *Law Offices of Brian J. Neary*, accessed November 26, 2013, <http://www.nearylalaw.com/>.

firms including McCormack, Matthews & Petrolle (where he worked with the late Superior Court Judge Timothy McCormack) and Tompkins, McGuire, Wachenfeld & Barry (a Newark law firm founded by Irish American William B. McGuire). Judge Cavanaugh also remains actively involved in many Irish-American organizations in the state.

The most notable Irish-American judge from New Jersey was the late Justice William J. Brennan, Jr. Brennan was born in Newark, New Jersey in 1906. He grew up in Newark and attended Barringer High School.<sup>16</sup> After attending the University of Pennsylvania for college and Harvard Law School<sup>17</sup>, he returned to New Jersey and began his career at the law firm of Pitney Hardin.<sup>18</sup> Shortly thereafter, Brennan was appointed as a judge on the Superior Court of New Jersey and then a Justice on New Jersey's Supreme Court. In 1956, President Dwight Eisenhower appointed Brennan as an Associate Justice on the United States Supreme Court.<sup>19</sup> Brennan served on the Supreme Court until his retirement in 1990. During Brennan's years on the Court, he saw a dramatic shift from the liberal leanings of the Warren Court to the conservatism of the Burger and Rehnquist Courts.

Brennan was also known for his opinions and dissents, in which he might slip in a scathing sentence or two. He was a strong opponent of the death penalty and a strong supporter of civil rights and liberties. Notably, Justice Brennan wrote the majority opinion in *New York*

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<sup>16</sup> Seth Stern and Stephen Wermiel, *Justice Brennan, A Liberal Champion*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010), 13.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

*Times v. Sullivan Co.*, 376 U.S. 254 (1964), a significant first amendment case which held that actual malice must be proved in libel cases.

## Legal Education

The deans of two of New Jersey's most prominent law schools are also of Irish descent. Dean Patrick E. Hobbs was appointed the Dean of Seton Hall Law School in 1999. Dean Hobbs's background and accomplishments are detailed more fully in the section on the Irish American Bar Association of New Jersey, as he was honored for his achievements by the IABANJ in 2010.

John J. Farmer, Jr. was appointed the Dean of Rutgers Law School – Newark in 2009. From 1999 to 2002, Dean Farmer was the Attorney General for the State of New Jersey under the administration of Governor Christie Todd Whitman.<sup>20</sup> Dean Farmer also served as senior counsel for the 9/11 Commission, and he has authored a book on terrorism entitled *The Ground Truth: The Story behind America's Defense on 9/11*.<sup>21</sup>

## **Irish-American Lawyers in New Jersey and New York: Pursuing Justice through Social and Political Action**

### Banding Together

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<sup>20</sup> "John J. Farmer, Jr.," *Rutgers School of Law – Newark*, accessed November 26, 2013, <http://law.newark.rutgers.edu/faculty/faculty-profiles/john-j-farmer-jr>.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

In the 1970s, Northern Ireland was in turmoil. Between 1970 and 1974, 1132 people were killed, including civilians, paramilitaries, members of the Northern Ireland police force, and members of the British military. In an effort to escape detention, many men and women who had engaged in violence with the British military and the Northern Ireland police force fled Northern Ireland. While many fled south of the border to the Republic of Ireland, some crossed the Atlantic, many of them landing in New York and New Jersey.

These men and women who came to these shores were under constant threat of deportation back to Northern Ireland. Not knowing if they had legal rights or status here, they started seeking legal advice from the New York law firm of O'Dwyer & Bernstein, LLP, an Irish-American legal institution. In the 1970s, the law firm opened its doors to provide advice to those who had fled arrest and detention in Northern Ireland and arrived in New York and New Jersey. But the volume and complexity of the cases quickly became overwhelming. On an evening in 1978, in an effort to grapple with these issues, a number of prominent Irish-American attorneys met at O'Dwyer & Bernstein. That evening, the Brehon Law Society, deriving its name from the ancient system of Brehon civil laws that applied in Ireland before the predominance of the common law system, was formed. These attorneys elected Tom Fitzpatrick, a former federal prosecutor, as its first president.

The Brehons take on the British Government in U.S. Federal Court

The Brehons' biggest battle was just around the corner. On January 21, 1977, the United Kingdom/United States Extradition Treaty went into effect. The treaty provided a system where the British government, through a United States attorney, could apply to a Federal Court for the

return to Northern Ireland of persons facing trial in Northern Ireland who had fled to the United States before trial.

Dessie Mackin was arrested in Northern Ireland in regards to the shooting of a British soldier on March 16, 1978. He was later charged with attempted murder, but, before his trial, he fled Northern Ireland for America. He entered America illegally and was later apprehended by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in Manhattan. While Mackin was detained by the INS, the British government made an application to have Mackin returned to Northern Ireland to be tried for attempted murder. Mackin went to court in Manhattan and fought the attempt to return him to Northern Ireland.

Mackin's situation was similar to that of so many of the people who fled Northern Ireland and sought legal advice from O'Dwyer & Bernstein: he was charged in Northern Ireland for offenses related to violence against members of the British military. The British government viewed his violence as terrorism and wanted him returned to Northern Ireland for trial. Mackin viewed his actions as political struggle.

Knowing this was going to be a test case, the Brehons weighed in behind Mackin, providing representation through Keara M. O'Dempsey, Esq., Frank Durkan, Esq., James Gilroy, Esq., James P. Cullen, Esq., and Sheila Donohue, Esq.

The Court pored over all the evidence and the briefs. It heard oral arguments from the United States Attorney and Mackin's lawyers. And then it ruled. The Court held that the British government, through the United States Attorney, had produced enough evidence to prove that Mackin should be tried in Northern Ireland for the shooting the British soldier. However, the Court refused to order the return of Mackin to Northern Ireland because it accepted Mackin's argument that the shooting was a political act. The impact of the decision was immense. The

Court had reasoned that, because Mackin was engaged in a political uprising and his actions were incidental to that political uprising, he should not be returned to Northern Ireland.

Frustrated by the decision, the United States Attorney appealed the decision to the United States Court of Appeals, Second Circuit. The Second Circuit upheld the decision of the lower Court and awarded Mackin the costs of fighting the appeal. As Brehon Sean Downes put it, “the decision was a turning point for us because it vindicated the rights of Irish republicans in America not to be wrongly persecuted for their political beliefs and political activities in resisting British rule.”

While the Brehons had success with judges in the Mackin case, it would a different challenge convincing a Manhattan jury of the nuanced distinctions between a criminal offense and an act of political uprising.

#### Charles Caulfield and his Green Card

Charlie Caulfield was convicted in the Republic of Ireland for offenses related to his membership in the Irish Republican Army (I.R.A.) He served three years in Portlaoise Prison, the highest security prison in the Republic of Ireland. After his release, he applied for and was granted a green card to enter and work in the United States.

In 1995, the United States government charged Charlie Caulfield with lying on his application for a green card, alleging that Caulfield should have disclosed that he had been charged and convicted in Ireland for carrying arms for subversive purposes.

In January 1998, the case was presented to a Manhattan federal jury. Caulfield was represented by Michael G. Dowd, a prominent Brehon. Dowd framed the issue as whether or not

Caulfield gave an honest answer to the question on a green card application. The question on the application was whether or not Caulfield had been convicted of a crime.

There was no doubt that Caulfield was charged, convicted, and served 30 months in prison; however, Caulfield maintained that the allegations against him in Ireland were a political issue, not a criminal issue. The jury sided with Caulfield and believed that Caulfield's understanding of his conviction in Ireland was correct: he had been convicted for engaging in a political act, not for criminal behavior. Caulfield won and got to stay in America.

Today, the return of Irish republican veterans to Northern Ireland is not as pressing an issue as it was in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. One of today's challenges for the Brehons is a new, but very similar, battle in which the Brehons and other Irish-American organizations are seeking to resist a request by the British government, through the United States Attorney, to return information, archived and contained in Boston College's Burns Library, to Northern Ireland.

#### Another British Treaty; Another Fight for the Brehons

In 2001, in an effort to grasp the complexity and enormity of the issues stemming from the thirty years of violence in Northern Ireland, Boston College began a program of interviewing people who had engaged in violence during that time. Twenty-six interviews were conducted, and each interviewee was promised that the content of the interview would only be released on the interviewee's death or before the death of the interviewee, if the interviewee consented. A unit within the Northern Ireland police force claims that the contents of the interview of one interviewee, Delours Price, could unlock a forty-year-old unsolved murder.

In December 1972, Jean McConville was killed. Her body was accidentally discovered in August 2003 by members of the public who were walking on a beach where her body had been buried. Her murder was tragic, as she left behind several orphaned children.

On August 4, 2011, the United States Attorney, acting for the British government, served subpoenae on Boston College for the release of any and all information contained in the oral history relating to the death of Jean McConville. It is understood that the information sought by the subpoena is likely in the interview conducted with Price.

The original source of the subpoena is unknown; however, it is generally acknowledged that that the ultimate target of any investigation is the leadership of Sinn Féin, the former political wing of the Irish Republican Army (IRA). Price has publicly claimed that the leader of Sinn Féin, Gerry Adams, ordered the murder of Jean McConville in 1972. Adams has denied this claim.

In December 2011, a Federal District Court in Boston ordered that the contents of Price's interview that relate to the abduction and murder of Jean McConville be transferred to the British authorities. The Court stated that language of the treaty requires compliance with the subpoena. In total, it ordered that 85 interviews be transferred.

The decision of the Federal Court was appealed to the United States Court of Appeal, First Circuit. In May 2013, the First Circuit ruled that 11 interviews would be transferred.

The Brehons viewed the subpoena as an attempt by unreformed, rogue elements of the Northern Ireland police force to destabilize the peace in Northern Ireland because the allegations, if any, by Price are not recognized as evidence in Court. <sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Delours Price died on January 23, 2013, permitting the release of her interview.

The true source of the subpoena is a mystery. In a meeting with the Brehons in October 2011, then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Owen Paterson, acknowledged that he was learning for the first time that the subpoena had been issued. The Brehons and other Irish-American organizations applied political pressure on the Department of State and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to withdraw the subpoenas. This pressure resulted in formal letters to the then-current Secretary of State, by Senators Menendez (New Jersey) and Schumer (New York) and former Senators Kerry (Massachusetts) and Brown (Massachusetts), urging the Department of State to work with the British authorities in considering a revocation of the subpoena request.<sup>23</sup> The effort to stop the transfer failed.

The concerted effort of the Brehons and other Irish-American organizations in mobilizing political pressure revealed that Irish Americans had the ability to gather significant political interest in Irish issues but did not have the political weight to convince the Secretary of State and Attorney General to stop the transfer. If Irish America becomes complacent about its involvement in Northern Ireland, it may find it much harder to mobilize political interest for the obstacles that will inevitably surface as the fight for peace continues. Because the Brehons' purpose has its roots in the violent conflict in Northern Ireland, its work might be as pressing as ever.

### Can the Irish Apply?

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<sup>23</sup> Interestingly, former Senator Kerry was Secretary of State at the time of the actual transfer and it is not known what intervention, if any, he made on the issue. However, the death of Delours Price that permitted the release of the interviews would likely have shaped any decision on whether or not to intervene. Ms. Price was alive on January 23, 2012, when former Senator Kerry wrote former Secretary of State Hilary Clinton on the issue. Ms. Price died one week before John Kerry was sworn in as Secretary of State.

In the 1980s, when Northern Ireland was at war, the whole island of Ireland was in an economic recession. Ireland had a young population of highly-qualified graduates who were forced to emigrate because of high unemployment and dire employment prospects in Ireland. Among these emigrants were Irish lawyers who came to America in search of employment as attorneys.

The requirement for Irish lawyers to become New York attorneys was equivalent to that of attorneys from other common law jurisdictions: if the Irish lawyer was trained with a recognized number of credits from an Irish law school, the Irish lawyer was eligible to sit for the New York bar exam. Because of their legal training, legal experience, and immediate eligibility to sit for the New York bar, the Irish lawyers who arrived here in the early 1980s were considered very employable.

In 1989, this system came under threat when an amendment was proposed to the Court of Appeals of the State of New York to amend Rule 520.5 of the Rules for Admission of Attorneys and Counselors of Law. Knowing that the opportunities for future Irish attorneys would be greatly impeded if the amendment was successful, a group of Irish and Irish-American attorneys, who were already admitted to the New York bar, submitted a brief to the Court in favor of continuing the system that was then in existence. Those attorneys organized themselves as the Irish Lawyers Association of New York. The Association had a registered membership of almost 75 practicing lawyers in the State of New York, virtually all of whom received their academic legal education in the Republic of Ireland. Among its purposes, the association acted to safeguard the professional interests not only of its then current members, but also of Irish law graduates who may be contemplating a professional career in New York. The Association set up a subcommittee that drafted the brief that included Brian Havel, Esq., Walter Walsh, Esq., Daniel

O’Leary, Esq., Brian Farren, Esq., Linda O’Shea Farren, Esq., William Maguire, Esq., John Burns, Esq., and Eilis Brennan, Esq.

The brief is riveting reading and challenges the assumption that Irish-educated attorneys were not ready to sit for the New York bar without further American education. The following passage is one example:

The Irish Lawyers Association of New York takes special pride in reminding the Court that the “shared heritage” of the U.S. and Irish Legal systems enabled the State of New York, almost since its inception, to benefit from the services of such renowned Irish-trained jurists as Thomas Addis Emmet (1764-1827) and William Sampson (1764-1836).

Emmet, considered by many to have been the leading American advocate of his day, served as Attorney-General under Governor (later Vice President) Daniel Tompkins. Sampson’s efforts prompted the pioneering antebellum legal reforms that made New York a model for other states.

How these men would have been dismayed – and puzzled – by the anxious insularity that permeates the Committee’s ungenerous Report!

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We are not all Brehons

Following its legal success, the Association decided that it would cater to attorneys who had an interest in Ireland and Irish America, but without the political trappings of the Brehons.

In that role, IALA, which later became the Irish American Bar Association of New York (IABANY), morphed into one of New York’s more active bar associations. Its membership now includes attorneys and non-attorneys from all heritages, reflecting its expansion from an

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<sup>24</sup> Irish Lawyers Association of New York, June 15, 1989.

association of primarily Irish-born and Irish-educated attorneys into one open to all people with an interest in the law and Ireland.

While the Irish American membership continues to grow, IABANY has seen rejuvenation of applications and interest from Irish attorneys and Irish law school graduates because the legal market in Ireland is bleak. Many of these graduates and attorneys view admission to the New York bar as a prospect for employment, but the oversupply of graduates from American law schools makes the competition for legal employment very tough.

The success of IABANY has inspired the recent founding of similar organizations in Florida and Michigan, as well as Southern and Northern California. There is even a committee formed in Dublin to open a chapter the Irish American Bar Association, consisting of many attorneys who graduated from Irish law schools, practiced in New York, and later returned to Ireland to practice law. These associations are modeled on IABANY and have captured the enthusiasm of Irish-American and non-Irish-American attorneys to associate and celebrate their appreciation for Ireland and Irish America.

#### Irish-American Bar Association of New Jersey

In 2009, a group of Irish-American attorneys formed the Irish American Bar Association of New Jersey. The New Jersey organization was formed by Irish-American attorneys Domhnall O’Cathain, Francesca M. O’Cathain, Anthony P. Callaghan, Robert C. Rowbotham, II, G. Daniel McCarthy, Brendan P. McCarthy and Steve Lenox, a former aide to Senator Frank Lautenberg. The purpose of the organization is to provide a forum for attorneys in New Jersey to network and connect, within the context of celebrating a common heritage.

Since its inception, the Irish American Bar Association has grown and added new members from every different legal field. The IABANJ has also honored members of the New Jersey legal community who have dedicated their careers to serving the public good.

In 2009, the IABANJ honored Thomas McTigue, an Essex County Assistant Prosecutor, for his more than twenty years of dedicated public service. McTigue has been assigned to the homicide division of the prosecutor's office for numerous years and he has prosecuted some of the most high-profile homicide cases in New Jersey. Recently, McTigue prosecuted the defendants in the triple-homicide known as the schoolyard slaying that occurred in Newark in 2008. While the prosecution of the last of the five defendants is still ongoing, McTigue's hard work has led to the conviction and lifetime sentences for all of the other assailants. McTigue's career is an example of the dedication that many Irish Americans have shown in law enforcement.

In 2011, the IABANJ honored Patrick E. Hobbs for his efforts as the Dean of Seton Hall Law School. Dean Hobbs is a first generation Irish-American whose parents emigrated from Ireland to the United States in the 1950's. Dean Hobbs first joined the law school as a professor in 1990 and then was appointed the seventh dean of the law school in 1999.<sup>25</sup> Dean Hobbs has overseen the expansion of the law school's academic programs – starting the Institute for Law, Science and Technology in 2000 – and has also guided the law school in its rise in prominence.<sup>26</sup> Outside of his role as dean of the law school, Dean Hobbs has taken on several other notable positions including the head of the search committee for the next athletic director for Seton Hall

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<sup>25</sup> “Fulltime Faculty,” *Seton Hall – Law*, Accessed November 26, 2013, [http://law.shu.edu/Faculty/display-profile.cfm?customel\\_datapageid\\_4018=21040](http://law.shu.edu/Faculty/display-profile.cfm?customel_datapageid_4018=21040).

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

University and his recent appointment in 2011 by Governor Christopher Christie as the head of the State Commission of Investigation. <sup>27</sup>

In November of 2011, the IABANJ held its first event on Irish soil when it hosted an event at the Mansion House in Dublin, Ireland. The New Jersey State Bar Association, led by its president Susan A. Feeney, chose Dublin as the location for its mid-annual meeting. Enda Kenny, the Taoiseach (or president) of Ireland, was the special guest of honor who spoke with the members of the New Jersey bar who attended the event.

## Conclusion

It is a privilege to be a lawyer, but it is an even greater privilege to be an Irish-American lawyer in the State of New Jersey. New Jersey is known for fostering bonds within every type of community, and the community of Irish-American attorneys in New Jersey shares a special bond. There is great camaraderie within this community, whether working together or at opposite ends professionally or gathering and networking outside of work. Irish-American lawyers are proud of their heritage and the impact Irish-American lawyers have made in the law.

At the end of Justice Brennan's biography, the authors quote a speech Justice Brennan gave in 1954 during a St. Patrick's Day celebration in Boston. The words Justice Brennan spoke are particularly applicable here:

So it is, my friends, with you and me of Irish blood. As we go through life, may we be found lighting the lamps of truth and justice and righteousness, even as our Irish forebears before us, so that as time

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

passes and we move from the scene of action, our own children and their children after them, though we be lost to view, may tell the way we went by the lamps we lighted along life's pathway.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Stern and Wermiel, 547.