



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

## Harckham Honors Three SD40 Residents During Irish Heritage Month Commemoration

PETE HARCKHAM March 20, 2023

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*Baldwin Place, NY* – New York State Senator Pete Harckham commemorated Irish Heritage Month 2023 by honoring three residents from the 40th Senate District—volunteer extraordinaire John Gallagher from Ossining and Regimental Pipe Major Joe Brady and Irish dance teacher Katie Roper Izzo—for their substantial contributions to local, state and national organizations while highlighting Irish cultural traditions.

“I congratulate our honorees for the wide scope of their remarkable achievements,” Harckham said. “John has worked for several decades in helping underserved communities while Joe and Katie have made a difference in the lives of countless individuals in preserving the spirit and traditions inherent in the Irish people. These three individuals are exemplary figures in our country’s Irish-American population, and I am proud to honor and congratulate them for their tireless efforts in enriching the lives of countless New Yorkers.”

Harckham presented Senate Proclamations to the three honorees at a ceremony held on Sunday, Mar. 19 at the Clan na hÉireann School of Irish Dance, which Roper Izzo has owned and operated since 2019. The ceremony, which included performances from nine young Irish step dancers and Brady on the bagpipes, aired live on Facebook; to see a video of the event, click [here](#).

John Gallagher, an Ossining resident for more than 50 years, has been involved in several nonprofit organizations since retiring in 1989 from a well-known car dealership that he owned and ran with his brother. Some of the nonprofits that Gallagher has lent his efforts to include Ossining Rotary, Habitat for Humanity, Knights of Columbus and Friendly Sons of St. Patrick. For more than 40 years, he has been involved with prison ministry, working primarily with incarcerated individuals at Sing Sing Correctional Facility through Residents Encounter Christ and Hudson Link. Gallagher also plays piano and sings in a band that performs regularly at area nursing homes.

Joe Brady, Jr., a Peekskill resident and world-class bagpiper, served as Regimental Pipe Major of the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment for 33 years. In this role, he annually marched at the front of New York City’s St. Patrick’s Day parade, leading the battalion whose soldiers have marched at the front of the 260-year-old parade for the last 161 years.

Boasting of a strong Irish and Scottish ancestry, Brady began learning the bagpipes from his father at age seven. By 17 years old, he was rated as a professional open grade bagpiper—an extraordinary achievement at such a young age. Over the years, Brady has earned worldwide recognition as a bagpipe competitor, judge and performer. He has performed for numerous dignitaries and accompanied many of renowned musical acts, including the Chieftains, Wolftones, vocalist Andy Cooney and the High Kings.

Katie Roper Izzo, also a Peekskill resident, began Irish dancing at the age of 6 in Yonkers under the direction of Margaret Pike and continued her dance career, even after the Pike School closed in 2002. She competed in regional, national and international competitions, including the All-Ireland and World Championships. Roper Izzo retired from dance competition while pursuing her undergraduate studies at Iona College.

Roper Izzo launched her Irish dance instruction career in 2017, and two years later opened her own studio, Clan na hÉireann School of Irish Dance. Clan na hÉireann, which translates to “the Irish family,” was founded on the principles of love, loyalty, friendship, and family. This past year, Roper Izzo’s Irish dance students have performed at more than 60 events.

Irish Heritage Month is an annual celebration of the history and culture of the Irish people here in the U.S. Coinciding with St. Patrick’s Day on March 17, the celebration spans the entire month of March, and commemorates how the Irish people have influenced and contributed to American society.