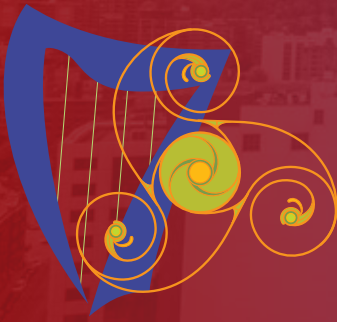


FALL 2023



Canadian Irish Studies Foundation

# FUNDAMENTALS

NEWSLETTER FOR FRIENDS OF IRISH STUDIES



## CELEBRATING TWO PILLARS OF THE SCHOOL OF IRISH STUDIES

Michael Kenneally and Rhona Richman Kenneally  
retire after illustrious academic careers at Concordia

**PLUS:** WELCOMING AN IRISH CULTURAL GEOGRAPHER • SUMMER STUDIES ON THE EMERALD ISLE



THE FOUNDATION'S CHAIR AND TRUSTEES WISH ALL OUR  
SUPPORTERS A HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND GOOD LUCK IN 2024!



# Celebrating two pillars of the School of Irish Studies

## Michael Kenneally and Rhona Richman Kenneally retire after decades of service



Michael Kenneally and Rhona Richman Kenneally pictured with public figures over the years: (1) Michael D. Higgins, Uachtarán na hÉireann (President of Ireland), 2019. (2) John Boylan, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Ireland to Canada, 2019. (3) Leo Varadkar, Taoiseach (Irish Prime Minister), 2017. (4) Prime Minister of Canada Justin Trudeau (left) and Ireland's then-Taoiseach Enda Kenny, 2017. (5) Michael Kenneally's honorary doctorate conferral from the National University of Ireland, 2015. (6) At a gathering of major CISF supporters, including former Prime Minister of Canada Brian Mulroney and Quebec politicians Pierre-Marc Johnson, Jean Charest and Daniel Johnson, Jr., 2019.

Distinguished professors emeriti Michael Kenneally and Rhona Richman Kenneally retired from Concordia University in January 2023 after illustrious academic careers.

The pair worked determinedly over decades to achieve their goal of building an Irish Studies school that has gained a broad international reputation as one of the pre-eminent institutions of its kind worldwide.

In 2019, both received Ireland's Presidential Distinguished Service Award for the Irish Abroad, conferred by Michael D. Higgins, president of Ireland, for their roles in establishing Irish Studies at Concordia.



### Michael Kenneally

Originally from Cork, Ireland, Kenneally came to Canada as a university student, earning his PhD from the University of Toronto before moving to Montreal.

In 1996, with Brian Gallery, BA 57, LLD 10, and Peter O'Brien, Kenneally co-created the Canadian Irish Studies Foundation (CISF), serving as its executive director until 2009. He was principal of the School of Irish Studies from its inception in 2009 until 2021. Upon retiring from Concordia University in 2022, he was elected a foundation trustee.

A dedicated member of the Irish community, Kenneally served as Honorary Consul General of Ireland in Montreal for two decades. He is a past president of the St. Patrick's Society of Montreal and Canadian Association for Irish Studies, as well as former chair of the International Association for the Study of Irish Literature. His many awards include honorary degrees from the University of Innsbruck, Austria, and the National University of Ireland, as well as Concordia's Academic Leadership Award.

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## CANADIAN IRISH STUDIES FOUNDATION FUNDAMENTALS

**Executive editor:** Marion Mulvenna

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### Rhona Richman Kenneally

Richman Kenneally is a fellow of the School of Irish Studies as well as a former chair of Concordia's Department of Design and Computation Arts. She was editor of the *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* and a co-organizer of a food studies research team under the university's Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies in Society and Culture.

Her numerous academic achievements occurred while simultaneously working with Kenneally to develop and evolve Irish Studies. At the School, she has taught classes in Irish Materiality and served as supervisor for several graduate students. She is the recipient of the 2015 Concordia Alumni Award for Excellence in Teaching and the Faculty of Fine Arts' 2014 Distinguished Teaching Award. She holds a BA in English Literature, MA in Canadian history and a PhD and professional degree in architecture.

### Retirement celebration

The Kenneallys were fêted at a dinner hosted by CISF board trustee **Kate Molson** with her husband **Geoff Molson** at the Bell Centre in January 2023. Fellow trustees and Irish Studies faculty and staff gathered to celebrate the prolific academic careers of Kenneally and Richman Kenneally and the couple's foundational work in bringing to life the School of Irish Studies.

Offering remarks to honour their accomplishments were CISF chair **Pamela McGovern**, CISF trustee **Mary Gallery**, inaugural CISF chair **Peter O'Brien**, School principal **Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin** and Concordia President **Graham Carr**.

Gallery expressed her respect and appreciation for their decades of hard work with her late father, founder and longstanding CISF chair **Brian O'Neill Gallery**, BA 57, LLD 10, and others to create the unique School of Irish Studies.

Comparing their exemplary record to the heroic figures of early Irish history and mythology, Ó hAllmhuráin quoted an old storyteller from the Aran Islands: "Chonaic siad rudaí nach bhfaca an gnáthdhuine, agus dhein siad gaisce." (They saw things the average person did not see and performed an extraordinary feat.) "Rhona and Michael's spirit of generosity in encouraging independent and interdisciplinary scholarship will continue to mark their legacy at the School of Irish Studies," he said.

"Congratulations to both of you," said McGovern. "We are grateful for your leadership and commitment in building a renowned School of Irish Studies. We look forward to carrying on your legacy of promoting the Irish story in Quebec, Canada and beyond."



## ORDER OF CANADA FOR PETER O'BRIEN

Canadian Irish Studies Foundation co-founder **Peter O'Brien** was appointed a member of the Order of Canada, one of the country's highest civilian honours, by **Mary Simon**, Governor General of Canada, in June.

The retired corporate lawyer and initial chair of the Canadian Irish Studies Foundation was honoured "for his committed volunteer leadership of health, education and faith-based organizations in his community." In addition to his service to the School, he has served as board chair for the Montreal General Hospital Foundation and the McGill University Health Centre, and board member at local companies.

Honouring his leadership at the CISF in its early years, the School hosts a Peter O'Brien Visiting Scholar in the fall term. Read about this year's scholar on page 6.

# Research news from School professors

The School of Irish Studies comprises seven full-time faculty members teaching 25 courses to 1,200 students over the 2023-24 academic year. Read about some of their recent research below.



## Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin

School principal and professor **Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin** presented his work at conferences in France and Spain and screened his film *Lost Children of the Carricks* at an international conference hosted by the School of Irish Studies at Concordia University

in April 2023. (Read more about the conference on page 6.)

Ó hAllmhuráin and Irish Studies lecturer **Kate Bevan-Baker**, PhD 18, GrCert 19, published an ethnomusicological study of Quebec fiddler Jean Carignan. “Irish Music or Pure Laine? The (Un)Quiet Revolution of Ti-Jean Carignan” appeared in *Études irlandaises*. He also wrote and presented a podcast on the Irish, Scottish and Welsh diasporas in North America for the YouTube channel, l'Imaginaire Celtique.



## Emer O'Toole

Associate professor of Performance Studies **Emer O'Toole** published a new book, *Contemporary Irish Theatre and Social Change* (Routledge), examining relationships between activism and contemporary Irish theatre and performance. She

co-presented a seminar on the topic at the University of Galway with **Ciara Murphy** of Technological University Dublin in July. O'Toole collaborated with the Irish Arts Council to bring award-winning Irish theatre company Brú to Concordia for a successful run of their virtual-reality experience, *Ar Ais Arís*, and was interviewed by CityNews Montreal with Brú Theatre's **James Riordán**.



## Máirtín Coilféir

In year two of a major project — Indigenous and International: Tracing Irish-Language Literature Across the Globe — assistant professor **Máirtín Coilféir** and PhD student **Dean Farrell** are reading a range of translations to see how the flora, fauna, landscapes and cultures

of Canada and the United States were absorbed into the Irish language. They plan to travel to Dublin for archival work in 2024. The work is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. A new course by Coilféir is based on his interest in manuscript-making, using his own collection of vellum skins, Montreal-made inks, Ethiopian manuscripts and pigment-making minerals.



## Jane McGaughey

The scandalous 1868 death of Mary Boyd, a young Irish Quebecer working as a maid in Toronto, was the topic of a keynote address given by **Jane McGaughey** as the Eccles Fellow in Canadian Studies at the University of London. McGaughey, who

is Johnson Chair in Quebec and Canadian Irish Studies at Concordia, plans to expand the subject into her next book. A volume McGaughey co-edited, *Environmental Migration in the Face of Emerging Risks* (Palgrave Macmillan), was published in June. Last spring saw the launch of the second season of Jane's podcast, *The Irish in Canada*. Downloads in its first year numbered more than 7,000. Find it on all podcast platforms or at [theirishincanadapodcast.ca](http://theirishincanadapodcast.ca).



### Gavin Foster

On a research sabbatical, **Gavin Foster** is writing a book on family and local memory of the Irish Revolution. He has also contributed to various publications marking the centenary of the end of the Irish Civil War and establishment of

the Irish state. An upcoming issue of the *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* will feature the text of his keynote lecture delivered at the 2022 Canadian Association for Irish Studies conference. Foster also appeared in a three-part television documentary, *The Irish Civil War*, which aired on Irish public broadcaster RTÉ in 2022.



### Keelan Harkin

**Keelan Harkin** researched the politics of Irish writers in the 1930s during a one-month fellowship with the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin. He presented on the topic as an invited speaker for Irish Heritage Quebec in Quebec City

in the summer. Two new publications include a book chapter and an article in the *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*.

At the 2023 Canadian Association for Irish Studies conference in Ottawa, Harkin presented a new research project on Cold War writing in Ireland. He also co-convoked a workshop for early-career researchers and graduate students and hosted a keynote interview with Belfast-based writer Jan Carson on her latest novel, *The Raptures*.



## NEW FACULTY APPOINTMENT: KATIE YOUNG

The School of Irish Studies welcomed **Katie Young**, assistant professor of Irish Cultural Geography, in fall 2023. She teaches courses on Irish Cultural Geography and Irish Night Studies.

“I look forward to joining a truly interdisciplinary team in the School of Irish Studies,” says Young. “I am excited for the opportunity to bring Irish cultural geography courses and research into conversation with other departments across the university.”

After earning her PhD in geography and music at Royal Holloway, University of London, Young completed a postdoctoral research project on music and night space at Mary Immaculate College, Limerick. She later worked on a transnational research project exploring geographies of gender in everyday life between Ireland and Canada, with a research team based at University College Dublin. Her co-edited volume *Sonic Signatures: Music, Migration and the City at Night* was published in summer 2023.



# Students travel to the Emerald Isle

Four Irish Studies scholarship recipients immersed themselves in research or language study in Ireland in summer 2023. Read about their experiences below.



**Collin Bonnell**, PhD candidate

“This summer I was awarded a very generous scholarship from the Irish Protestant Benevolent Society, through Concordia’s School of Irish Studies, to give a presentation at the European

Federation of Associations and Centers of Irish Studies Conference in Belfast. I presented a sketch of one chapter from my doctoral dissertation and received crucial feedback from distinguished scholars at the conference. The award also enabled me to extend my trip to consult relevant archives at public records and libraries in Belfast and Dublin. Thanks to the donors’ generosity, my research was far more productive than I had anticipated, and I have found many new leads which will help provide the foundation for my PhD.”



**Anaïs Ranger**, undergraduate

“Receiving this scholarship was a dream come true. I can’t express the wonder that filled me during the three weeks I spent in An Cheathrú Rua. I would come

home to our wonderful host family, my head full and buzzing like a beehive from hearing so much Irish. What a joy it was to comb through each new piece of knowledge and attempt to weave it securely into myself. Thanks to the scholarship, I made lasting bonds with fellow scholars whom I otherwise would likely never have met. Our

time together was full of everyone’s passion for sharing the language and learning songs and games. People always talk about the beauty of Ireland, and I too must pay homage. From the skies to the hills to the sea, I was humbled daily. Go raibh míle maith agaibh to the Canadian Irish Studies Foundation, Ireland Canada University Foundation and the donors who made this experience happen.”



**Liam Power**, undergraduate

“I am very grateful for the Gus O’Gorman Scholarship, which gave me the opportunity to travel to Ireland and immerse myself in the Irish language and Gaeltacht life this past summer. I learned

so much in the three weeks I was there — by the end I was even able to have some short conversations in Irish! The Ireland Canada University Foundation instructors were wonderful, the village was beautiful and my host family was very welcoming. Overall, a great learning experience.”



**Danielle Renaud**, BA 23

“I feel so fortunate to have been selected for this scholarship. It was the perfect way to round off my university experience. I found that professor **Máirtín Coilféir**’s language course at the School of Irish Studies

prepared me well for my time in the Gaeltacht. I had a great teacher, and while we learned a mountain of new vocabulary through games and exercises, I felt supported by the sturdy understanding I had acquired for the grammar. I had a really great time, and with such lovely people. Thank you so much to the Canadian Irish Studies Foundation for making this possible!”

# Other news



"Connemara Coast," February 2022 (oil on gesso board)

## Graduate donates original Irish artwork

Two-time Concordia alumna **Gillian MacCormack**, BA 84, MA 16, donated an original painting by Irish landscape and still-life artist **Maria Levinge**. The School of Irish Studies thanks MacCormack for her generous gift, showcased prominently in the School's main office.

## North American Gaels Conference at Concordia



A first of its kind in Montreal, the School of Irish Studies hosted the North American Gaels Conference at Concordia University in April 2023. It brought together more than 20 scholars from both sides of the Atlantic to discuss the Gaelic languages

in North America. Featuring experts on Scots Gaelic, Irish, Manx and Mi'kmaq cultures, the panels addressed both historical and contemporary experience, oral and written literature, geography, music, folklore, film and fieldwork. Among the sites of the Gaelic diaspora examined were Quebec, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island in Canada, as well as New York, New England and Chicago in the United States.

Sponsored in part by the Canadian Irish Studies Foundation, the project was a collaboration between Concordia's **Máirtín Coilféir**, **Natasha Sumner** (Harvard University), **Pádraig Ó Siadhail** (St. Mary's University, Halifax), and **Aidan Doyle** (University College Cork).



## MEET OUR 19TH PETER O'BRIEN VISITING SCHOLAR

A lecturer in history and European studies at University College Cork, **Jérôme aan de Wiel** became the School of Irish Studies' 19th Peter O'Brien Visiting Scholar. In the fall 2023 term, aan de Wiel taught two courses — History of Ireland and 20th Century Ireland in Europe and the World — and gave a public lecture.

Aan de Wiel received the 2021 National Teaching Hero Award from the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education and the Union of Students in Ireland. Originally from the Netherlands, aan de Wiel has published extensively and is fluent in Dutch, French, English and German. He also has a good reading knowledge of Afrikaans and Italian.

The Peter O'Brien Scholar is a visiting professorship made possible thanks to a partnership between Concordia and the Canadian Irish Studies Foundation (CISF). The position was created with financial support from Concordia Chancellor Emeritus **David O'Brien**, BA 62, in recognition of his brother Peter's work in helping to set up and serve as the inaugural chair of the CISF.

# Critical financial support for our students

The ongoing generosity of our many donors enables the Canadian Irish Studies Foundation to provide vital financial assistance — reducing financial barriers and rewarding academic achievement — to undergraduate and graduate students at the School of Irish Studies. In the past year, funds were awarded as follows:

## Undergraduate scholarships and bursaries

15 students ..... \$27,000

## Brian O'Neill Gallery Tuition Awards

19 students ..... \$28,500

## Graduate scholarships and awards

6 students ..... \$59,500

**Total student support.....\$115,000**

## THANK YOU!

“On behalf of our students, we are deeply grateful to our many donors for their generosity. We depend on your continued support to help our students reach their full potential.”

– Pamela McGovern, chair, Canadian Irish Studies Foundation



## Irish Studies winter 2024 courses

- The Irish in Montreal
- “What’s that tune?” Irish Traditional Music Appreciation
- Research Methods in Irish Studies
- The Global Irish
- Sexualities in the Irish Diaspora
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