

Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians – Anne Kelly

Anne M. Connaughton was born in Ireland in Roscommon, in Bally Garry. Anne had 2 brothers and one sister. One brother is deceased and her sister lives in Boston and Paul lives in the Rochester Area. She met her beloved husband Bob at a concert hall in the late 40's. Both were planning to emigrate to the USA against the wishes of her father. Anne, being a woman of her own mind, ignored those wishes and planned her emigration to the USA where she had 2 cousins in Rochester, NY, who encouraged her to come to the USA.

She and Bob, while not dating, discovered they made plans for passage on the same ship! Bob said if you have read the book, "Angela's Ashes", it is very much true of their experience on the ship. It was war time, and people were struggling to leave Ireland for the USA. It was very hard for the poor people, they recalled.

Their romance started on that ship. Bob was headed to Boston and Anne to Rochester, New York. Anne started working at Eastman Kodak on Valentines Day in 1949. She was very involved in her church, Saint Brigid's when she arrived in Rochester. Before long, Bob landed in Rochester and worked for Ridge Construction which, at the time, was part of Eastman Kodak. He was homesick and love sick!

St. Patrick's Day rolled around about 6 weeks after Anne arrived to the US and noted the differences in the holiday in Ireland, where people wore the shamrock, but it did not stand out here, she said. People here wore green hats or bonnets or something else green and there was a parade along Dewey Avenue, very different than the religious holiday celebrated in Ireland. None-the-less, Anne felt part of the Irish community here as well as in Ireland. She felt homesick, even though she had Bob, who was drafted in November of 1950 and served 5 years in the Army. Bob was well treated and began to love the American people of all different backgrounds. After the Army, Bob worked at Gleason Works and within 6 years, he became the chief lab technician. His homesickness was gone. He and Anne were married in Blessed Sacrament Church on December 31st in 1955 and they had a party at the Hibernian Club on Gregory Street in Rochester. They had 3 children – Sean (1960), Patricia (1961) and Paul (1963).

Anne joined the LAOH in 1949. She was very involved in the Irish community, for it was her family and friend base away from home. They taught the Irish Americans about Ireland and customs and beauty of Ireland. She became involved the founding of the Irish Famine memorial situated on the campus of Saint John Fisher College. Together with others, she and Bob called on their Irish friends and raised enough money to create the memorial. Anne and Bob were the Grand Marshall of the St. Patrick's Day Parade in 1990. Likewise, Anne was very involved with the Col. Patrick O'Rorke Society and the funding and renaming of the Stutson Street draw bridge to the Colonel O'Rorke Bridge. It is at the gateway of the Genesee River to Lake Ontario. Anne also had a picture of O'Rorke commissioned which hangs in the library at St. John Fisher college next the bust of him.

Anne held all the offices in our LAOH Division through the years and was on the County Board for many years as well. Once the membership grew too big for member's homes, Anne attended the meetings at Johnny's until she moved into an assisted living facility. She was also very active in the Irish American Cultural Association.

Anne attended the Saint Patrick's Day Mass at Saint Mary's, sponsored annually by the LAOH, and she recited the Our Father in Gaelic. Anne was instrumental in helping the LAOH learn Gaelic prayers over the years. She continuously shared her culture with the LAOH.

Anne is an extremely involved member of the Irish community. One cannot talk about Anne without also talking about her love, Bob, for they forged a new life in America together and worked on many initiatives together.

Her faith, endurance, and love of the Irish people here and in Ireland were exemplary. Anne was committed to the motto of the LAOH from the time she landed on American shores.