GRAND MARSHALS: Seattle Police Chief Kathleen O’Toole and Daniel O’Toole

You won’t find a more genuine Irish couple than Kathleen and Dan O’Toole. Massachusetts natives, both served in the Boston Police Department where Dan retired in 1988 after 22 years with the force. Kathleen later took on a succession of ranking jobs in Massachusetts law enforcement including superintendent of the Metropolitan Police, Secretary of Public Safety, and then as Police Commissioner. She also served in 1998-1999 on the Patten Commission, an international panel on policing in Northern Ireland, and ran a consulting firm specializing in US-Irish affairs. From 2006-2012, Kathleen and Dan moved to Ireland so she could serve as Chief Inspector of the Garda Síochána Inspectore, a body responsible for bringing reform, best practice and accountability to Ireland’s 17,000 member police force. She and Dan moved to Seattle in 2013 when she was confirmed as Seattle’s Police Chief. Kathleen’s grandparents were born in Athlone, Co. Westmeath and Dan’s grandparents were from Cong, Co. Mayo. They have one daughter, Meghan. We are delighted and proud to have Kathleen and Dan O’Toole as our 2016 St. Patrick’s Day Parade Grand Marshals.

HONORARY GRAND MARSHAL: Casey McNerthney

Casey McNerthney is a great-grandson of Lily (Kempson) and Matt McAlerney, and is the Honorary Grand Marshal of Seattle’s 2016 St. Patrick’s Day Parade. He is representing all the descendants of Lily Kempson McAlerney the last surviving 1916 combatant who died in Seattle in 1996, aged 99. Some of Lily and Matt’s other descendants will also be marching in the parade along with him. Casey was fortunate to get to know Lily well, as did many of her other great-grandchildren, and he loved hearing stories about her life in Ireland and her escape to Seattle after the 1916 Rising collapsed. He only wishes he had asked more questions. Casey is an Executive Producer at KIRO 7 television in Seattle and previously was a reporter at the Seattle Post-Intelligencer.
Frank Fahy was first elected a member of the Galway City Council in 2011 and was elected Mayor in 2015. He lives in an area of Galway called Menlo Village, a Gaelic speaking area where his family has lived since 1640. Gaelic is his first language and he promotes the speaking of Irish whenever he can and especially on civic occasions. Another important focus of his term as Mayor is the fostering of Galway’s relationships with its sister cities and especially with Seattle which has been a sister city to Galway since 1986. Mayor Fahy visited Seattle in March 2013 as Deputy Mayor and in September 2014 hosted a Seattle delegation in Galway that included the Seattle Police Pipes and Drums Pipeband as well as Seattle Mayor Ed Murray. On this Seattle visit he is accompanied by his wife Gerardine and Galway City Executive Joe O’Neill and his wife Kay. We’re delighted that the group from Galway is joining us in Seattle to properly celebrate Galway’s Sister City relationship with Seattle and St. Patrick’s Day. We extend to them a warm Céad Míle Fáilte (One Hundred Thousand Welcomes) from the Emerald Isle to the Emerald City.

Marking the Centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising

The Irish Week Button and Poster commemorate the 1916 Easter Rising (Irish: Éirí Amach na Cásca) in Dublin with the button incorporating the design of the flag flown over Dublin’s General Post Office during its Easter Week 1916 occupation. Also known as the Easter Rebellion, the Rising was an armed insurrection which started on Easter Monday, April 24, as an effort to end British rule in Ireland and to establish an independent Irish Republic. Initially, about 1,600 rebels were involved, including 200 members of Cumann na mBan, the republican women’s paramilitary organization. With vastly superior numbers and artillery, the British army quickly suppressed the Rising, and after five days of fighting the rebels agreed to an unconditional surrender. Following the drawn-out executions of sixteen rebel leaders, support for republicanism (the rebels) grew across Ireland. In December 1918, republicans won 73 Irish seats out of 105 seats in the General Election running on a policy of independence for Ireland. On January 21, 1919 republicans convened the First Dáil (Irish Parliament) and declared the independence of the Irish Republic. With the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1921, the Irish Free State formally came into being in 1922, six and a half years after the 1916 Rising. One of the Cumann na mBan members involved in the fighting during Easter Week 1916 was Lily Kempson McAlemy who died in Seattle in 1996, aged 99, the last surviving 1916 combatant.