



SALLY & JOHN ROCHE NAMED AS 2024 GRAND MARSHALS

Sally & John Roche named as 2024 Grand Marshal for Bergen County Saint Patrick's Day Parade in Bergenfield, NJ

The Council of Irish Associations of Greater Bergen County, Inc., is pleased to announce that Sally & John Roche of the Bergen Irish Association will be the Grand Marshals of the annual Saint Patrick's Day Parade. The Bergen County Parade has a proud tradition of honoring Saint Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, and the Irish people of Bergen County.

Sally Roche hails from County Dublin and was raised in the heart of County Galway. The eldest among eight siblings, she was born to the late Margaret and Michael O'Grady, both originally from County Galway. Her educational journey took her through Shanballard National School and Saint Killian's Vocational School in New Inn County Galway.

In the summer of 1960, Sally embarked on a transformative journey to the United States, where she found purpose working at the Immigrants' Savings Bank and Pacific Insurance Company in the bustling hub of New York City.

Sally's path intertwined with John Roche from Feenagh Kilmeedy, County Limerick, in 1964, culminating in their joyous union in 1965. Together, they lovingly raised three children - John, (Rest in Peace), Margaret, and Michael. The family has expanded to include twelve grandchildren and three great-grandchildren, a testament to the enduring bonds Sally and John have woven.

Her passion for community engagement blossomed when she joined the Bergen Irish Ladies Auxiliary in 1989, with the benevolent sponsorship of Kathleen Monaghan. Since then, Sally has been an integral force within the association, adorning various roles such as Sergeant at Arms, Recording Secretary, a Board of Directors member, and even ascending to the offices of Vice President and President.

Sally's journey has seen her share the joy of dance through her active participation in the auxiliary's events, as well as her spirited involvement in the Tuesday night Ceili Group led by Patsy McLaughlin. Her heart also finds resonance in the rhythmic cadence of set dancing and traditional music, often gracing Monday night set dancing guided by Gerry Kennedy.

Sally embarked on a path of learning, completing courses at United Healthcare in Englewood, earning her certification as a Home Health Aide in the state of New Jersey. Her thirst for knowledge is further evidenced by her attendance in various classes at Bergen Community College.

Sally is a proud member of the Council of Irish Associations, where she has served in leadership positions and chaired dances. She is an active participant in the Rafferty-Madden Ceoltas Group, as well as a dedicated delegate to the Council for the McLaughlin School of Irish Set Dancing. Her dedication was recognized when she was bestowed the title of Deputy Grand Marshal in 2008, an honor she shared with Grand Marshal Kathleen Collins.

John Roche is the eldest among eleven children born to the late John and Margaret Roche, from County Limerick. John's educational journey encompassed schools in Feenagh Kilmeedy and Dromcollagher Vocational School. Following a brief stint in England, John immigrated to the United States in 1963, commencing a journey that led him to a 39-year tenure at Empire City Subway Company, a subsidiary of Verizon Telephone Company.

Sports have long been a source of passion for John. He participated in cross country with the Rising Sun Club during his time in England and engaged in Junior Hurling with St. Mary's Club. John's devotion to his heritage is evident through his affiliation with Feenagh Kilmeedy Club and Saint Brendan's in Brooklyn. Fatefully, he crossed paths with Sally at a dance in the Bronx's iconic Red Mill venue.

An ardent fan of Irish football and hurling, John's heart swells with pride when Limerick takes the field, particularly during their victorious streak of four All-Ireland triumphs. Within the folds of the Bergen Irish Association, sponsored by the late Jim Devin, John remains an active contributor, often found tending bar during dance functions or meticulously maintaining the hall and its surroundings.

Both Sally and John cherish their visits to Ireland, using them as precious opportunities to reconnect with family and friends. Together, Sally and John stand as pillars of their community, united by their shared passions, deep roots, and unwavering commitment to family and heritage.

The Council of Irish Associations of Greater Bergen County, Inc. is proud to have Sally & John Roche serve as our Grand Marshals for the 2024 Bergenfield Saint Patrick's Day Parade along with our Aides & Honorees to the Grand Marshals:

- ★ **Kate Duggan**, Bergen Family Promise
- ★ **Michael Devine**, Bergen County Sheriff's Office & Ancient Order of Hibernians
- ★ **John Devine**, Paramus Police Department & Ancient Order of Hibernians
- ★ **James Higgins, Jr.**, Bergen Irish Pipe Band
- ★ **Mike McFadden**, Bergen Irish Association
- ★ **Kevin McCann**, Clan Na Vale Pipe Band

Gunning Award Recipient

- ★ **Bridget McLaughlin**, Council of Irish Associations

The 42nd Annual Bergen County Saint Patrick's Day Parade is expected to take place on Sunday, March 10, 2024. Prior to the start of the parade there will be a flag raising at the Roy W. Brown Middle School in Bergenfield, NJ, at 1:00 PM, where Sally & John will deliver their Grand Marshal's address, followed by the Annual Parade March down Washington Avenue at 2:00 PM. Join us on Saturday, November 4th at 12PM at The Graycliff for our Grand Marshal Installation Brunch. More information can be found on our website at <https://www.bergencountyirish.org/>