

Press Release

The American Ireland Fund Marks Its 30 Year Anniversary in Chicago with a Record-breaking \$1 Million Gala

November 5, 2014 -- The 30th Anniversary Chicago American Ireland Fund Dinner was held Wednesday evening, November 5, at the Hilton Chicago. It was the most successful in the three-decade history of the event and it was a remarkable tribute to the support base in Chicago that a record-breaking \$1 million dollar fundraising goal for Irish charities and causes was achieved.

700 guests gathered at the sold-out dinner to honor Father John Jenkins, C.S.C., President of the University of Notre Dame, with The American Ireland Fund 2014 Leadership Award and Ellen and Jim O'Connor, Chicago civic and philanthropic leaders, with The American Ireland Fund 2014 Humanitarian Award. Mr. Andrew J. McKenna (Former Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the University of Notre Dame) presented Father John Jenkins, C.S.C. with his award and Mr. John Canning, Jr, (Madison Dearborn Partners) presented the award to Ellen and Jim O'Connor.

Thomas F. Meagher, Jr., Regional Advisory Board Chair, welcomed and thanked the guests; gave an update on the Fund in Chicago; and introduced a brief film retrospective of the past honorees. President and CEO of The Worldwide Ireland Funds, Kieran McLoughlin spoke about the enduring links between Chicago and Ireland, and the impact the generosity of Chicago is having at a time when it is needed most for nonprofit organizations working across the island of Ireland.

Also in attendance that evening were Ireland's Ambassador to the U.S. Anne Anderson; Chairman of The American Ireland Fund John Fitzpatrick and Loretta Brennan Glucksman, Chairman Emeritus of The American Ireland Fund. The evening supported The Worldwide Ireland Funds' *Promising Ireland* Campaign to support nonprofit organizations across the island of Ireland and around the world.

About The American Ireland Fund:

The American Ireland Fund is part of The Worldwide Ireland Funds, a philanthropic network across 12 countries that has raised over \$480 million for worthy causes in Ireland and Irish causes around the world. It is the largest network of friends of Ireland dedicated to supporting programs of peace and reconciliation, arts and culture, education and community development. Founded in 1976, The Worldwide Ireland Funds have benefited over 3,000 organizations. Funds raised are contributed by private philanthropists and organizations.

In response to the severe downturn in the Irish economy, The Worldwide Ireland Funds launched the *Promising Ireland* Campaign in 2009 to raise \$100 million for charities experiencing an increased demand for their services at a time of a major reduction in resources. Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of donors, the initial goal has been exceeded and the target has been doubled to now raise \$200 million. As a result, one third of the Funds' total earnings since foundation have been raised during the five years of the Campaign. Over 650 outstanding projects and organizations have received support from the Promising Ireland Campaign. The American Ireland Fund holds the highest 4-star rating from Charity Navigator in recognition of efficiency, sound fiscal management and commitment to accountability and transparency.