

Ocean City Irish Student Outreach

On Friday, May 28, 2010 Ambassador Michael Collins hosted a luncheon in honor of Mr. William (Bill) Ferguson. Bill has been the Coordinator of the OC Irish Student Outreach Program for 12 years and is now retiring from the position and moving to California. There were 40 people in attendance. Attendees included the Mayor of Ocean City, the Maryland Secretary of State representing the Governor, the President of the Ocean City AOH, and past and present volunteers of the student volunteer network. Fr. Brendan McBride and Mrs. Geri Garvey represented the Irish Apostolate USA and the Irish Episcopal Commission for Emigrants at the luncheon. Fr. McBride shared a message written by Bishop Seámus Hegarty and presented Bill with an original photo of an Irish landscape done by Giles Norman.

Bill will be able to mentor the two new co-coordinators of the program – Mrs. Denise Boswell and Mr. Bill McGarrity over the summer.

Message from Bishop Seamus Hegarty, Chair of the Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants (IECE).

Ambassador Collins, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

My best wishes to you today as you come together to honour William (Bill) Ferguson. May I begin by paying tribute to Ambassador Collins and the Irish Embassy for hosting this event.

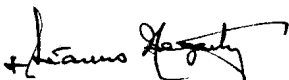
Bill Ferguson has been reaching out to and supporting Irish students in Ocean City for over a decade. His work and the work of the Ocean City Irish Student Outreach have benefited thousands of young Irish students over many years. Whether it is advice regarding housing and employment or the provision of basic necessities – help has always been on hand. He has also been there for students in times of illness, incident or injury. His warmth and genuine concern for others, has brought comfort to vulnerable Irish emigrants in times of particular hardship.

It is most pleasing to know that the work of Bill Ferguson and the Ocean City Irish Student Outreach will continue after his retirement. My best wishes to those who will be continuing this admirable outreach to Irish students. Please know that the support of the Irish Bishops' Council for Emigrants and the Irish Apostolate USA will always be on hand.

Bill, your work and engagement with the Irish community of Ocean City grounded as it is in the selfless and caring support of others, makes manifest the best qualities of your Irish heritage and ancestry.

I thank you for your commitment and may God bless you now and in the future.

Kind regards and best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Seamus Hegarty". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

PHOTOS FROM THE LUNCHEON



Figure 1 (l to r) Mayor Richard Meehan - Ocean City, Bill Ferguson, Ambassador Michael Collins, MD Secy of State John McDonough



Figure 2 Mayor Meehan, Bill Ferguson, Ambassador Collins



Figure 3 Ambassador Collins, Bill Ferguson, Fr. Brendan McBride



Figure 4 Attendees at the luncheon