



B.I.G.S.
BUFFALO IRISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
1997-2017
245 ABBOTT RD * BUFFALO, NEW YORK 14220
Ed Patton, President ~ Diane Blaser, Vice-President
Margaret Fabinsky, Secretary ~ Donna M. Shine, Treasurer
<http://bigsNY.webs.com>

As President of the Buffalo Irish Genealogical Society, BIGS, I am nominating Donna Shine. As a founding member of our Society she has been a mainstay of the organization while benefiting the society and other cultural groups by her initiative and selfless activities.

A number of years ago I was involved in an activity brought about by Jack Fescio, who had located a large private collection of Irish books owned by an elderly man, Roy Phelps. He wished to donate his library to the Buffalo Irish Center so that they might be used to establish a library there to promote Irish history and culture.

For more than a year the collection languished in storage. Donna stepped up, even while she was employed, and volunteered to organize a library. At the time, Donna had no formal training or experience in setting up a library. However, as a payroll clerk for the Town of Orchard Park, New York, she had organizational skills and the willingness to learn what she needed to accomplish the goal of creating a great resource. In short order, Donna galvanized a group of people, including her husband Jim and a friend, Kevin O'Brien, to catalog, organize and set up shelving and created a beautiful library at the Buffalo Irish Center. The Library quickly became a center for other activities that included the establishment of BIGS at the library.

In 2012, I received information that an old acquaintance of mine, from Adams Basin, NY, Staley D. Soules had passed away. His sister inquired if I might have an interest in looking at his library at his home. A quick inspection revealed an incredible collection of books, manuscripts, photos, artifacts from a number of Mr. Soules life experiences. His genealogical and historic books and manuscripts and maps were amazing. Donna helped me round up some volunteers to load out many truckloads of the materials to the Heritage Discovery Center at 100 Lee St. Buffalo, NY.

We knew that the collection would overwhelm the space at the Buffalo Irish Center as it was already crammed with books and other materials. A meeting was set up between the Heritage Discovery Center and BIGS. Donna agreed to once more establish another library at HDC. This was an enormous task as a number of societies had re-located to HDC to gain the space they needed. Donna, along with other members of BIGS assumed responsibility for establishing the library and the associated archive. Donna volunteered to take over as the librarian for HDC. Anyone who has visited the library can readily see what a wonderful job she did with her volunteers. Two national archives have re-located from the Univ. of Cleveland to HDC. The Buffalo Lighthouse Assoc. has located there also and houses its library materials there. The parent company of HDC, the Western NY Railway Historical Society also needed to organize their holdings. Once again, Donna stepped up to the task. Out of that activity a large database was established with the historical personnel records of the WNYRHS holdings. Working with a small number of volunteers, Donna saw to it that the library was completely cataloged, shelved and prepared for use.

Donna has continued her volunteer activities in taking in other collections as the reputation has grown of the skills of the library staff. She also maintains her duties as treasurer of BIGS and the library group. Donna has given much time of herself to see that the library advances in skills and public activities. Donna also is a published author and poet. She volunteers for the staff of the Buffalo Irish Times. Donna has become a skilled library and organizer without the benefit of a degree in Library Science. Her thousands of hours of volunteer activity has made her a wonderful

Community asset. Donna continues to volunteer at the Irish Center Library in addition to her duties at HDC and elsewhere. The hundreds of people that come in to HDC are impressed with her skills, her organization and her willingness to help them.

Donna, and her husband Jim, have through the last several years used their own funds to advance the HDC library. Now that the Library at HDC has reached a stable situation Donna continues to administer the grant funds that have come to HDC Library.

I sincerely believe that Donna has been an enormous asset to the Buffalo Irish Center Library and the Heritage Discovery Center Library. She has made both libraries into great community assets. We think that she is very qualified to be the recipient of the Excellence in Library Service Award.

Sincerely and respectfully submitted,

Edward J. Patton

President, BIGS

Trustee, HDC