News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Batt Burns, a Night of Storytelling at the University of St. Thomas

HOUSTON (Jan. 11, 2010) – Travel to another time and place with acclaimed Irish storyteller Batt Burns. Come listen to haunting accounts of ghosts, great adventure stories, and more at the University of St. Thomas Center for Irish Studies' cultural event entitled, "Whisperings of Ireland," to be held at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb.10, at Cullen Hall, 4001 Mt. Vernon.

As a child, Burns experienced the seanachie, storyteller tradition firsthand when he lived with his grandfather in the hills of County Kerry, Ireland, and heard him tell stories by the fire during the harsh winter nights. Today Burns helps to preserve Irish heritage with tales of heroes, farcical stories and witty jokes. In his recitations of poetry, Burns draws on the rich field of Irish poets including W.B. Yeats, Oscar Wilde, Patrick Kavanagh, Padraic Colum, Brendan Kennelly and Seamus Heaney.

In 1983, Burns won the All-Ireland Teachers' Talent Competition, which sparked his second career. He left his first career, teaching, in 1994, and became a full-time entertainer in the United States. He has performed at all the major storytelling festivals, which include the Houston International Festival, Ohio Irish Festival, the Cleveland Cultural Festival, the Ri Ra Festival in Butte, Mont., and the National Storytelling Festival in Jonesborough, Tenn. Burns was the feature storyteller at The Masterton Storytelling Festival in New Zealand in 2000.

Burns has also presented his stories to several Irish clubs and college campuses, including Harvard University, University of Notre Dame and Northwestern University. He has performed at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. on many occasions, and will perform again on St. Patrick's night 2010.

Burns is the author of many school textbooks and stories, and has produced tapes and CDs of poetry and storytelling. In February 2009, he launched his new book of Irish folktales in the U.S. For further information on Burns, visit www.battburns.com.

The event is free and open to the public, and is sponsored by the UST Center for Irish Studies Cultural Outreach Forum and The Irish Society. No RSVP is needed. Parking is available for $2 in the Moran Center, 3807 Graustark at W. Alabama. For more information, contact Lori Gallagher, director of the UST Center for Irish Studies, at 713-525-3592 or at irishstudies@stthom.edu.