



UNIVERSITY of ST. THOMAS

*Educating Leaders of Faith and Character*

# The Center for Irish Studies Receives Unprecedented Accolades

The University of St. Thomas Center for Irish Studies and its director, Lori Gallagher, JD, have experienced a banner year, earning an impressive round of international, national, state and local accolades. Kudos include earning a spot among the top 10 Irish Studies programs in the nation, Gallagher being named to the Global Irish 100, Gallagher receiving the Irish American Leaders of Texas award, and Gallagher and the Center receiving hometown honors at the 2009 Houston International Festival Mayor's Gala.

Please join the University in extending our sincere congratulations – or as they say in the Irish language, “comhghairdeas” – to Lori Gallagher and the Center for Irish Studies for their well-deserved recognition.

IrishCentral.com, an Irish Web site, launched by the New York-based *Irish Voice* newspaper and *Irish America* magazine, named University of St. Thomas Center for Irish Studies as one of the top 10 Irish Studies programs in the United States. The Center is listed among University of Notre Dame, Boston College, New York University and Catholic University of America. This Web site reaches 70 million people around the world who identify themselves as Irish.

In March, *Irish America* magazine named Lori Gallagher, JD, director of University of St. Thomas Center for Irish Studies, as one of its Global Irish 100, a list of the most revered and influential “Sons and Daughters of Erin.” The Global Irish 100 list is the first time a worldwide honor roll of Irish has been created. The list coincided with the launch of IrishCentral.com, just in time for St. Patrick's Day.

Gallagher is a fourth-generation Irish American whose family immigrated to America in the 1860s from Donegal. Gallagher oversees the University of St. Thomas Irish Studies academic program, which consists of an undergraduate minor program, a graduate concentration in the Master in Liberal Arts program and the Ireland Study Abroad Program. She has served as the Center's director since its opening in January 2003.

She received her undergraduate degree in English and Journalism as well as her Juris Doctorate degree from the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. Gallagher came to the University from Andrews Kurth L.L.P. in Houston, where she was a partner, head of the appellate section, and practiced civil appellate law for 18 years. She also received a postgraduate diploma in Irish literature from Trinity College, Dublin on a Rotary Foundation Scholarship. Her career at UST enables Gallagher to combine her Irish heritage and love of Irish literature, history, politics and culture with her legal background.



Shown above at the Mayor's Ball, from left to right: Curtis Huff (Lori Gallagher's husband), Laurelle Gallagher (Lori Gallagher's mother), Lori Gallagher, Mary Rouine, and Consul General of Ireland Martin Rouine.

Gallagher and the Center for Irish Studies received hometown recognition from the Houston International Festival 2009 as honorees at the Mayor's Gala on Thursday, April 16. Ireland was the featured country for the 2009 festival. Additional honorees were Honorary Consul General of Ireland John B. Kane, who serves on the Center for Irish Studies Advisory Board, and the Consular Corp. Distinguished guests included Consul General of Ireland Martin Rouine, who lives in Chicago and whose jurisdiction includes Texas, and his wife Mary, Houston Mayor Bill White and Harris County Judge Edward M. Emmet. More than 400 people, including many Friends of the Center for Irish Studies, attended this black-tie event, which benefits the Houston International Festival arts and education programs.

In June, *Irish Echo*, the oldest newspaper serving Irish America, will hold its Texas Irish American Leaders Celebration in San Antonio. At the event, Gallagher, along with other honorees, will receive the Irish American Leaders of Texas award for her work to promote Ireland and its culture, heritage and history as well as her contributions to Irish America.

The Center for Irish Studies also recently was featured in *Irish Echo* newspaper for its ongoing campaign to name the Center after “legendary Irish American businessman and peace process architect,” William J. Flynn. Gallagher is spearheading a \$1 million fundraising drive to name the Center after Flynn while simultaneously creating an endowment. The Center has also set up the Friends of Bill Flynn to boost the funds drive.

“Our campaign to honor Bill Flynn, by naming the Center for Irish Studies after him, not only recognizes his contribution to the Northern Ireland peace process, but also ensures that we continue to promote the key elements of that process,” said Gallagher.

The University offers five or six interdisciplinary Irish Studies courses each semester, including Irish language classes as well as cultural programming. To learn more about the Center for Irish Studies, go to [www.stthom.edu/irishstudies](http://www.stthom.edu/irishstudies). To view IrishCentral's Web site, go to [http://www.irishcentral.com/advice/irish\\_studies/](http://www.irishcentral.com/advice/irish_studies/).



William J. Flynn and Lori Gallagher, J.D., Director, University of St. Thomas Center for Irish Studies.

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