

“Laughter is wine for the soul – laughter soft, or loud and deep, tinged through with seriousness – the hilarious declaration made by man that life is worth living.” -- Sean O’Casey

Along with a record heat wave in July 2022, many Irish Americans came “home” to visit Ireland for some much-needed craic. Among them, was Kevin White (Irish America Hall of Fame Inductee 2017) along with friends and family. Kevin, whose ancestors came from Dungloe, and



Jane, whose ancestors came from Dublin, organized the trip to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary. As you can tell by the smiles and laughter, it was a wonderful trip for all on none other than the greatest island on earth.

On July 6 Kevin and Jane landed in Dublin and immediately drove up to Dungloe, Donegal, some 250 miles, to Kevin’s ancestral home. The rest of the White family were scheduled to arrive on the 12th, which provided ample time to visit both family homesteads, in Roshine South and Falmore. They have visited Dungloe almost every year since 1993. Kevin’s great, great grandfather’s, James Boyle, home, currently owned by Jack and Martin Brereton, is located in picturesque Falmore overlooking the mighty Atlantic Ocean. Kevin and Jane have endeavored to purchase this respective property for literally decades! Jack and Martin are now

close friends and exceedingly active within the greater Dungloe community. This particular property is where Kevin’s grandmother, Mary “Mariah” Boyle, was born. In Roshine South, about four miles from Falmore, sits the O’Donnell (Hugh O’Donnell) homestead, which is where Kevin’s grandfather, Patrick, was born in 1883. While in Donegal they stayed at the Waterfront Hotel (Town Center, Dungloe), which was just perfect in every way.

Upon returning to Dublin, Kevin and Jane were greeted by John and Katie Anthony, of Anthony Travel, who arranged the trip/tour; and, who happen to be very close friends of the White family, as well as Charlie and Rebecca Besser, of Intersport. Both couples wanted to celebrate the White's 50th wedding anniversary, as well as their retirement from college athletics after a 38-year tenure, serving Loras College, The University of Maine, Tulane University, Arizona State University, University of Notre Dame, and Duke University.

Unbeknownst to Kevin and Jane, some twenty close friends and former colleagues arrived shortly thereafter to join the celebration. These colleagues had all once worked for Kevin at various athletic departments across America and are now all industry leaders in their own right. Each serves in prominent leadership roles throughout college athletics today.



The Anthonys arranged for the Whites and their guests to stay at the Westbury and Marion Hotels, as well as visit the EPIC Center (Every Person Is Connected), whereby Dr. Declan Brady,

renowned Genealogist and Historian, had prepared a deep dive study relative to Kevin's ancestral background.



Each evening, the group was treated to world-class dining at venues such as Stephen's Green Club, Sole, FIRE, and Bar Italia and enjoyed sight-seeing around Dublin.

While in Dublin, Mark Daly, Chair of the Irish Parliament, greeted Kevin White, Jane White, and their son Michael White. Senator Daly hosted the group and treated them to an Irish Parliament session. Senator Daly also loved showing his guests the picture of his two favorite Irish Americans on his office wall - President Barack Obama and General Martin Dempsey.



Kevin was also treated to a tour of Aviva Stadium, where Niall Rynne gifted him with an Irish Team Rugby jersey signed by the team! This was of course after Ireland had just defeated New Zealand for the first time in their history.

Pictured with Kevin: Niall Rynne, Czar of Irish Rugby, and Martin Murphy, CEO of Aviva Stadium.



Once the rest of the White family arrived, they added some 25 out of 28 family members to the trip. Kevin and Jane's five children, their respective spouses, and 13 of 16 grandkids (three little one's didn't make the travel squad) were ready to join the party on Grafton Street.

The following pictures show the family in the Burren, in Galway Bay on kayaks and paddle boards, on the Dunbrody Ship in New Ross, in the Irish America Museum, and on the walkway at the Cliffs of Moher.



The entire White family spent several hours at the Dunbrody Famine Ship Experience and Irish American Museum in New Ross hosted by Sean Connick, Chairman of AVEA Association of Visitor Experiences & Attractions, and his team, where Kevin quips they were “treated like royalty”! There they experienced an enactment of the harrowing crossings so many Irish families braved during the Potato Famine via a recreated ship, Dunbrody. The talented actors on the ship were masterful in their ability to convey the hardships of the famine period in Irish history. Each family member, youngest to oldest, was deeply touched by the experience; it is a part of all of our histories that is made quite real, if not palpable, aboard the Dunbrody.



With a sharpened sense of appreciation, the family traveled on to Galway, Lahinch, the Cliffs of Mohr, and Doolin. Lots of great music and laughter was had by all. As O’Casey alludes to in his quote, those tinges of seriousness (like the tour of Dunbrody) make laughter all the louder and deeper because we are so lucky and so alive.

The trip was a once in a lifetime experience for this Irish American family and it was filled with, as Kevin would say, “far more blessings than we deserve”.