

The West End Museum

Boston's Neighborhood Museum

Museum Marks Irish Heritage Month by Honoring Notable West Enders of Irish Descent

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Boston, MA—As part of Irish Heritage Month, [The West End Museum](#) is once again celebrating notable West Enders of Irish descent. On Tuesday, March 14, the Museum will host its Irish Heritage Honoree Night from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Refreshments will be served. The event is free and open to the public. This year's honorees are **Joseph A. McDonald** and **John I. Fitzgerald**. (Media note: Downloadable images of each honoree appear [here](#).)

Joseph A. McDonald [1902-1986] Born in the West End in 1902, the sixth of seven children of two Gaelic-speaking immigrants, Joseph A. McDonald graduated from the Wendell Phillips Elementary School and English High School. He joined the Hendrick's Club, Martin Lomasney's social and political group, and was a runner for Lomasney at the Democratic National Convention in New York City in 1924. McDonald served as a social worker from 1935 until his retirement in 1969. For 34 years, he was responsible for all of the boys from the West End, North End and Beacon Hill in need of services. He worked closely with the Elizabeth Peabody House, the West End House and the youth sports leagues—and helped to found Community Boating—to help keep the boys out of trouble. McDonald also served as manager of the West End Night School, which offered citizenship, music, carpentry and clothes-making classes. He fought against urban renewal, but sadly had to move to Jamaica Plain when the neighborhood fell. He was a founding member and the historian of the Old Time West-Enders, a group of older men who met annually in the 1960s and 70s. When he passed in 1986, his funeral was held at St Joseph's Church in the West End, something he had insisted upon prior to his death.

John I. Fitzgerald [1882-1966] Not to be confused with the unrelated John F. Fitzgerald, twice mayor of Boston, this John Fitzgerald served as the decade-long leader of Ward 3 (West End and North End), overseeing the transition from Ward Boss Lomasney's club-based political model to the modern model of political committees, individual candidacies and campaign funds. Prior to Lomasney's death in 1933, Fitzgerald progressed through the old system and was chosen by "the Mahatma" to be a City Councilor in 1925, where he served for 14 years. John was City Council President in 1935, 1936 and 1937. He became Democratic Party Ward Chairman, remaining neutral in intra-ward primaries, but organizing enthusiastic campaigns for final elections against candidates from other wards. He demonstrated great tact when he felt it necessary to persuade the multi-ethnic West Enders to support North End candidates of Italian descent. During the New Deal era, Fitzgerald made sure that Ward 3 residents benefited from the new programs and he remained very popular among voters. In 1939, he recognized that a North Ender should represent Ward 3 and he retired, to be replaced by Joseph Russo.

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About the West End Museum:

The West End Museum is dedicated to the collection, preservation and interpretation of the history and culture of the West End neighborhood. The Museum's permanent exhibit, "The Last Tenement," highlights the immigrant history of the neighborhood through its decimation under Urban Renewal in 1959; two additional galleries feature rotating exhibits. The Museum is located near North Station. Its entrance is on Lomasney Way. Hours: Tuesday - Friday 12:00pm - 5:00pm; Saturday 11:00am - 4:00pm. Admission is free.

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