

THE
TRANSFORM
SOCIAL | BUSINESS | COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The Flax Trust continues to provide significant and valued support in the form of Bursaries to enable participants access the full programme of academic qualification and professional development.



Participants with former Irish Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, Prof. Ken O'Neill Chair, SSEI, Prof Jackie McCoy Vice Chair SSEI, Bill Manson Director of Podiem

Enrichment Through Respect for Difference

Luncheon Chair
Tom O’Brien

Chairman, President & CEO Sterling Bancorp, Vice President Flax Trust/America

Honorary Luncheon Co-Chairs

Oliver Christin British Consul General	Gerard Angley Consul General of Ireland
Richard Cushnie, Director/Counsellor Northern Ireland Bureau	Stephen Rich, Chair, CEO & President Mutual of America
John J. Kelly, CPCM Managing Hanover Stone Partners, LLC	Senator George J. Mitchell Partner DLA Piper
Michael J. Dowling CEO Northwell Health	James P MacGilvray CEO JP Mac, LLC
Loretta Brennan Glucksman Philanthropist	Gerald Crotty, President Weichert Enterprise LLC
Joe Browne, President Joe Browne Agency	Niall J. Murray, Managing Principal, & CEO Rockabill
David O’Sullivan, Exc. Director The Ireland- U.S. Council	Ed McDermott Jr., Pres. Emeritus Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research
Edward Kenny sr. Brigid Kenny	Shawn M. Griffin, Partner Harris Beach PLLC
Patricia Harty Editor/Co-Founder Irish American Magazine	Michael J. Gibbons, Chairman Ireland - U.S. Council Foundation
Alfie Tucker, Vice President Event Management Mutual of America	Paul O’Hara, Senior Vice President Market Research Mutual of America
Cathy Toner Dr. John & Patricia Brennan	Patrick Grace, President & CEO Grace Institute Foundation
John Feerick, Norris Professor of Law Founder and Senior Counsel Center for Social Justice, Fordham University	Robert J. Reilly Assistant Dean (retired) Fordham Law School
Brian Conroy, Executive Vice President Director North America IDA	Andrea Haughian, Exc. Vice President Head of Americas Invest NI
Aidan McKenna, Regional Director The Americas / Enterprise Ireland	Henry Horkin, Director, North America Bord Bia
James Dale Retired Hyatt Executive	P. Douglas Benson Management Consultant
Paul Gallon, GM Pier Sixty LLC	Bebhinn Gallen DS Rainbow Room, Rockafella Centre
Maura Lundy Trustee Flax Trust	John Patterson Trustee Flax Trust

Mary J. Grace, Restoration Design Consultant Vice Chair Flax Trust / America
Sr Mary Turley Trustee, Chair Flax Trust / Vice President Flax Trust/America
Jim Quinn, President Emeritus Tiffany & Co., President Flax Trust / America

Dan Barry
Reporter and Columnist
New York Times

Dan Barry is a longtime reporter and columnist for The New York Times. The author of several books, he writes on myriad topics, including sports, culture, New York City, and the nation.



Since joining The Times in September 1995, Barry has covered many major events, including the World Trade Center catastrophe, Hurricane Katrina, and the coronavirus epidemic. His honors include the 2003 American Society of Newspaper Editors Award for deadline reporting, for his coverage of the first anniversary of Sept. 11; the 2005 Mike Berger Award, from the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism; the 2015 Best American Newspaper Narrative Award; the 2019 American Society of Newspaper Editors Award for feature writing; three Emmys for documentaries produced by The Times; the Eugene O’Neill Award; and the inaugural Pete Hamill Award for Journalistic Excellence, in 2021. He has also been nominated as a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize twice: once in 2006 for his slice-of-life reports from hurricane- battered New Orleans and from New York, and again in 2010 for his coverage of the Great Recession and its effects on the lives and relationships of America.

He previously worked at The Providence Journal, where, as a member of its investigative team, he shared a George Polk Award in 1992, for a series on the causes of a state banking crisis, and a Pulitzer Prize in 1994, for an investigation into Rhode Island’s court system that led to various reforms and the criminal indictment of the chief justice of the state’s Supreme Court.

Barry has also written This Land: America, Lost and Found, a collection of his “This Land” columns; The Boys in the Bunkhouse: Servitude and Salvation in the Heartland; Bottom of the 33rd: Hope, Redemption, and Baseball’s Longest Game, which received the PEN/ESPN Award for Literary Sports Writing; City Lights, a collection of his “About New York” columns; and Pull Me Up: A Memoir, published in 2004. He has also edited a Library of America volume dedicated to the journalism of Jimmy Breslin, and his writings have appeared in several anthologies.

Born in 1958 in Jackson Heights, Queens, he was the first child of Eugene Barry, of Brooklyn, and Noreen (Minogue) Barry, of County Galway, Ireland. He grew up in Deer Park, on Long Island, attended St. Bonaventure University and New York University, and worked as a ditch digger and delicatessen clerk before landing his first newspaper job, at the Journal Inquirer of Manchester, Conn., in 1983. He and his wife, Mary Trinity, live in Maplewood, N.J., where they raised two daughters, Nora and Grace.

Alison Metcalfe
Executive Vice President, Head of North America
and Australia/New Zealand Tourism Ireland

Based in New York, Alison has responsibility for leading Tourism Ireland’s Marketing Strategy and Operations in the USA and Canada. In June 2017, Alison also assumed management responsibility for Tourism Ireland’s operations in Australia/New Zealand.

Alison joined Tourism Ireland in 2002 and previously held the position of Vice President Marketing, USA. Alison has also held leadership roles with Tourism Northern Ireland and Visit Britain.

With 30+ years of destination marketing experience, Alison has a record of achievement in building and leading high-performance teams to deliver impactful marketing and business growth. Her career has spanned strategy development, brand management, integrated consumer marketing, advertising, communications, stakeholder management and product development.



With offices in New York, San Francisco, Toronto and Sydney, Alison leads a team of 35 marketers and industry professionals.

In 2024, North American travellers made 1.4 million trips to the island of Ireland spending €2.2 billion an increase of 19% over 2023. The US market is the most important source of overseas tourism revenue for Irish tourism accounting for more than one third of revenue spent by overseas visitors. Given the importance of the US market and recognising the future growth potential, Alison led the expansion of Tourism Ireland’s network in the US, with the opening of a West Coast office located in San Francisco in January, 2022.

Alison also serves as Chair of the European Travel Commission (ETC), USA Chapter in New York. ETC is the organisation responsible for the promotion of Europe as a tourist destination in key long-haul markets and is comprised of 35-member National Tourism Organisations.

Alison is a frequent guest speaker and panellist at industry conferences and events, and has worked in the UK, Europe and North America.

Alison has a Master’s degree in management studies for Tourism & Hospitality and a BA (Hons) in History and has completed Executive Management education at Columbia University and Harvard Business School.

When not out and about inspiring North American travellers to visit the Island of Ireland, Alison enjoys spending time at her home in Helens Bay, Co. Down with her husband Brian, a native of Belfast and enjoying the great outdoors, hiking and golfing.

Peter McGuire

Ambassador Sovereign Order of Malta to the United Nations
Founder, Chairman, President and CEO Xchange Benefits

Peter has extensive brokerage, underwriting and executive management experience. Peter commenced his career at Lloyd's of London. He has held senior and executive positions at Willis (NASDAQ:WTW), headquartered in London, as the Managing Director of the Northern European (including Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia) Treaty Reinsurance Division (Property and Casualty). Peter was also responsible for all worldwide Accident and Health reinsurance at Willis.



At QBE ([QBE.AX](https://www.qbe.com)), Peter was initially Underwriting Director in Dublin Ireland and then General Manager responsible for all insurance operations in North America and Bermuda based in New York, at the time a \$1,000,000,000 portfolio of property, casualty and health insurance.

Peter founded Starr Global Accident and Health Insurance Agency, a joint venture with C.V. Starr and Company, where as President and CEO he grew and managed a portfolio of accident and health insurance and reinsurance to over \$200 million. Peter successfully sold management's equity to C.V. Starr. Whilst at C.V. Starr, Peter also managed the C.V. Starr Group's marketing division and built the property and casualty program insurance underwriting unit. Peter also successfully negotiated the establishment of a syndicate at Lloyd's of London and the opening of offices in China through joint ventures.

Peter is the founder, Chairman, President and CEO Xchange Benefits, an underwriting agency based in New York. Xchange Benefits commenced underwriting in 2010 and in 2020 sold a majority share to Ambac (NYSE:AMBC). Xchange Benefits currently has a value in excess of \$150,000,000.

Peter is a Knight of Malta and was appointed as an Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Observer for the Sovereign Order of Malta to the United Nations in the summer of 2023.

In October 2024 Peter was appointed the Regent of the Subpriory of Our Lady of Lourdes for the Order of Malta. Peter is also the outgoing President of the Friendly Sons of St Patrick in the City of New York.

The Flax Trust as a registered charity, formed in Belfast in 1977, has as its mission the reduction and if possible, the elimination of community tensions and religious prejudices by creative engagement in economic and social development, education and training, with inter-community activities including culture, the arts, sport, health, social programmes and personal development.

Community Regeneration Projects, North Belfast

ABC is a 'shared' community education, health, leisure and arts centre. Flax Trust is working in collaboration with ABC Trust, TEO Urban Villages, Dept for Communities, Dept of Infrastructure and Belfast City Council, developing this community regeneration project.



John and Nancy Kelly, New York; Darren and Jemma McGinley Somerset;



Peter Mc Ardle, Brandon and Matt Washington DC; Michael Rafferty /property manager; Jack and Barbara McConnell, Florida.

The old Brookfield mill now contains 22 town houses and 55 apartments.

North Belfast Cross Community Youth Programme

Thank you once again Flax Trust for your generosity and commitment to empowering these young people through education and experience - Steps 2 the Future Project



The trip to New York and Washington DC was an incredible experience for our young people, filled with hands-on learning and new perspectives. They not only gained valuable life skills, but also had the chance to explore new environments, challenge themselves, and develop a deeper understanding of the world around them. The educational aspect of the trip was at the core of everything they experienced.

Flax Trust Music Bursary Awards 2025 Bridging the Divide



Cross Community Reflections Through Music at Holy Cross, North Belfast.

Master of ceremonies James McGinn, MBE; City of Belfast Youth Orchestra (CBSM Brass & String Ensemble - Pierce Morgan); Megan Mooney(Soprano) and Bethany Simpson (Oboe).

Chamber Serenade City of Belfast Youth Orchestra sponsored by Michelle McIlveen MLA., in Stormont Buildings in association with Flax Trust

Conductor's CBYO Award



Conductor: Paul McBride with **harpsichordist** Jack Fusco; **Leader** Sienna Whiteman (violin); **Soloists** Ciara Rogan (harp); Bryan Barr (oboe).



Sienna Whiteman (violin) leader CBYO, receives the Flax Trust Conductor's Bursary Award from Conductor Paul McBride. Sienna recently performed as a soloist in the Ulster Hall Belfast, in Florence, Montecantini and Riva Garda. Sienna's aim is to pursue a career as a professional violinist.



Flax Trust / Camerata Ireland Bursary Award

Kseniia Yershova recipient of the Flax Trust Bursary Award, from Sr Mary Turley. Kseniia who graduated from Stolyarky Specialised Music School in Odesa performs as both violinist and violist and is now entering third year of BMus at MTU Cork.

Flax Trust / Queen's University Bursary Awards



Sarah Hoben



Phoebe Gooding

Sarah Hoben (soprano) Northern Ireland Young Musician of the year 2022; Operatic debut: Northern Ireland Opera 2024; Released her debut EP 2025.

Phoebe Gooding (soprano) Background choral singing, currently solo artist, continuing studies in voice 2026.