

# A Brief History of the Emerald Society

On St. Patrick's Day 1961 Frank and John Kearins were working as collectors in Grand Central Terminal. The Kearins along with their co-workers Con Leary, Jim O'Donnell, Matt Leavy and Transit Police Officer Terry McGabe considered it a shame that transit workers had no place to go on the most special of days to the Irish.

John went to FDNY Emerald Society who advised him on how to start a society. He along with Patty Thompson and others held a series of meetings with Martin Connors, an attorney for the FDNY Society. As a result of these meetings, our Emerald Society was incorporated on September 6, 1961.

The stated objectives of the Society include the following:

- *To develop a spirit of brotherhood/sisterhood, fraternity, unity and fellowship amongst its members.*
- *To encourage its membership to improve themselves in the study, knowledge and learning of Gaelic culture.*
- *To preserve and make known the spirit and tradition of craftsmanship, technical proficiency and American ideals in the heritage of persons of Irish ancestry who have participated in the operation, maintenance and administration of the world famous New York City Transit system.*
- *To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of American and the State of New York at all times.*

These precepts in conjunction with Constitution and By-Laws still guide the Society and its members today.

Initially, meetings were held at the Irish Institute on West 48<sup>th</sup> St. Refreshments were generally served after the meeting. Many dances and socials were held there and at other venues.

In 1963, the society marched up 5<sup>th</sup> ave. as a group for the first time. We were one of the last units to step off, but the wait was worth every minute to show our pride. Since then we have marched in every parade, regardless of the weather conditions. In the late 1990's we were delighted to welcome our Brothers and Sisters from Dublin Bus to march with us.

Our annual Dinner Dance is the highlight of our social calendar. Every year we honor people who have displayed an exemplary contribution to the Irish community. We also participate in various cultural and sporting events.

As we look to the future and the challenges that face us, let us not forget our past, for it has shaped that very future. Let us not forget the vision of our founders so we may keep our Society and our Irish culture strong and vibrant.

