



## Irish American Society of County Will

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February 21, 2019

(Photos on following page)

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Manhattan Irish Fest (MIF) will be held on March 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> in downtown Manhattan. The Irish American Society of County Will (IASCW) is once again the official Fest host in conjunction with the Village of Manhattan. The always popular parade will begin at 11am on Saturday, March 2<sup>nd</sup> beginning on North Street then proceed to State Street. The parade is led by runners participating in the Irish Fest 5K. The Manhattan Park District provides activities to make the day fun for families.

In 2018 the IASCW officially announced that the King & Queen Scholarship will forever be named the "Michael J. McHugh Memorial King & Queen Scholarship". Mike was a lifelong Manhattan area resident and business owner who dedicated himself to the community. He was a founding member of the IASCW in 1981 and one of the founding organizers of the Manhattan Irish Fest. Mike gave back to his community in many ways and loved to talk about his Irish heritage.

The 2019 MIF Committee is proud to announce the 2019 winners of the Michael J. McHugh Memorial King & Queen Scholarship. The King award goes to Jason Cler; and the Queen award goes to Holly Hildebrand, both of Lincoln-Way West High School. Each student will receive a \$1000 scholarship toward the school of his/her choice. The Manhattan Irish Fest has awarded \$29,000 in scholarships since 2004.

Jason is the son of David and Laura Cler of Manhattan. He plans to attend a Big Ten school and major in nursing. He states, "I am beyond excited to start my journey next fall in pursuit of a successful career." He also plans on getting a Masters in Nursing in order to become a Nurse Practitioner.

Jason has been extremely active during his high school years, participating in the wide variety of sports, activities and clubs that LW West has to offer. He has been elected President of his class all four years

and has been a member of the Volleyball team during his entire high school career. Jason enjoys working with students with disabilities both at school and through outside programs.

Holly is the daughter of Susan Lesniak and Daniel Hildebrand. Holly plans on majoring in Physical Therapy while attending Carroll University in Wisconsin. She developed a passion for Physical Therapy after witnessing how they can provide comfort, support, and training for people in need of such services. She stated, "I want to use my experience to assist families to cope with their situations, but I also want to give them hope as their loved ones reach new milestones during recovery."

Holly has been an active member of the Girl Scouts over the last thirteen years and is a certified lifeguard. She is dedicated to helping others overcome obstacles whether physical, financial or academic. She enjoys working with others and looks forward to the next chapter in her life.

As always, Manhattan Irish Fest will offer Irish heritage and culture through, bagpipers, Irish dancers, Irish entertainment, food and drink. Activities will take place at the Main Tent on Park Street. Entrance buttons are \$7 in advance and \$10 at the gate.

Net proceeds go back into the community to organizations such as: Manhattan Neighborhood Food Pantry; Operation Care Package; Manhattan Youth Athletic Association; Manhattan Fire Department Local 4991; Manhattan Park District; and local baseball and rugby clubs. Each organization donates time to promote the Fest, help run the Fest, and sell raffle tickets--there are no paid workers. All efforts and guest attendance help to award scholarships, brightens military lives, create programs for area children and promote local businesses.

Jason Cler – King



Holly Hildebrand - Queen

