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Local News

Doctor in store for Sister Deevy Stonehill College taps Irish Immigration Center head

By Thomas Keown

Sister Lena Deevy, executive director of the Irish Immigration Center, will receive an honorary Doctor of Humanities at Stonehill College's 57th commencement ceremony May 18. Deevy, a longtime leader in the Irish community, will be recognized for her work in helping immigrant communities in Boston.

"It is a humbling honor to receive from an academic institution I so greatly respect," said Deevy. "One of

the strongest driving forces behind the programs I have been involved in and helped create over the years has been education and the empowerment that comes with it. I admire and thank Stonehill for the opportunities they are creating for our future leaders."

Deevy left her native Ireland 20 years ago to study at Harvard. While completing her Masters degree in the School of Education, Deevy contributed to the growing scholarship on the plight of the undocumented Irish in Boston. Her leadership and vision helped found IIC and develop it into one of the nation's prominent immigrant advocacy organiza-

tions. "Sister Deevy is a product of her environment—an Irish rural farming community with a focus on discipline, hard work and faith," explained a spokesman for Stonehill, citing her grassroots approach to social change and her tireless advocacy for the poor as reasons for her selection.

Stonehill College was founded in 1948 by the Congregation of Holy Cross whose members established the University of Notre Dame (1842). In the Catholic tradition, the Holy Cross Community seeks to broaden and enrich the horizons of students.

A longtime advocate of immigration reform, Deevy sits on the Board of Directors of the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition and is a member of the Development Committee for the Haymarket Peoples Fund. Deevy is one of several honorees chosen for their work in aiding society, including psychologist Robert Jay Lifton and philanthropists Lawrence and Theresa Salameno.

The Irish Immigration Center helps newly arrived immigrants from more than 100 countries each year. Deevy's

stewardship of the organization has helped form the core principles of the IIC: cross cultural solutions and inclusiveness. The organization has developed programs for building peace in Northern Ireland and other post-conflict states. The organization also provides services for all immigrants in Boston and works to build bridges between the Irish community and other minority groups in the city.



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