



NYPD Emerald Society, Inc.

October 14, 2009

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Gentlemen and Ladies,

The New York City Police Department Emerald Society has entered into a supportive relationship with Mr. Ian McGowan and the Winged Fist Organization. The Winged Fist Organization is dedicated to the preservation of the memory of the Irish-American Athletic Club (I-AAC). As I know you are aware, this club produced a number of Olympic athletes of notoriety in the early 1900's, and of particular interest to the Emerald Society, many, although not all, of these athletes were also New York City Police Officers.

Mr. McGowan has, for several years, been learning about the rich history of the I-AAC and he recently acquainted our organization about his efforts. Mr. McGowan indicates that you have agreed in principle to the concept of a plaque commemorating the club, its athletes, and the Celtic Park area, and so we are heartened by your interest in this important chapter of American, and New York City history.

The Winged Fist Organization is working to create a plaque which appropriately represents the historical and cultural importance of the Celtic Park. Our review of the design of the plaque reveals Mr. McGowan gave great thought to conveying the pride with which our Police Officers, and others from all walks of life, wore the emblem of the Irish-American Athletic Club in competitions both here and abroad, and we think he has succeeded in achieving his goal. It is our sincere belief that rather than being offensive, this symbol of the Winged Fist denotes an important chapter in the history of our city, our country, and the Celtic Park area. On behalf of our organization, I ask that you reconsider your request to have that important symbol removed, and allow the plaque to contain that expression of our history.

I also want to note that although the Emerald Society is working very closely with Mr. McGowan, the Irish-American Athletic Club was an endeavor which brought out the best in our ancestors in terms of the broad representation of people of all races and ethnicities who comprised the club. Despite its name, the Irish-American Athletic Club boasted members who were African-American, German-American, and of many different religions, including Jews and Catholics alike. It is an important story to be told and re-told, perhaps one which will reinforce the progress we have made in this country on the issues of tolerance and brotherhood, from those seminal beginnings. As you can see from the plaque, supporters of this effort come from all walks of life, and we continue to seek other organizations which represent the diversity of the I-AAC to sign on with us in supporting Mr. McGowan's efforts.

I appreciate your taking the time to consider this request, and for your support of this effort to preserve and cultivate appreciation for the contribution of Irish-Americans, and all members of the I-AAC, to the history of New York City.

Sincerely,

George W. Anderson
Headquarters Vice President
Emerald Society, Inc.
Police Department
City of New York