



Kevin John & Maryann Meara

Kevin John and Maryann (nee Chiappetta) Meara were both born in 1958 at St. Francis Hospital in Trenton, NJ and have resided in Hamilton Township for five decades. They have two married children, Killian (Kait) and Kelly Rose (Mike) and two granddaughters Caley Ray and Fiadh Rose. Kevin is second generation Irish Catholic as his paternal grandparents, Philip Joseph and Catherine (nee Boney) Meara emigrated from County Tipperary, Ireland to the U.S. in 1906. He is one of eight siblings born to Philip Joseph and Marjorie (nee Moylan) Meara. Kevin and his parents are all Honorably Discharged from the US NAVY, where his father served in WWII. Kevin graduated from Saint Anthony's High School and Mercer County Community College, where he also served as a student representative to the MCCC College Senate. Maryann is one of three children born to Raffaele A. and Dolores (nee MacArthur) Chiappetta and graduated from Hamilton High West where she was 1976 Homecoming Queen. The MacArthurs are of Scotch, Irish and English descent.

Kevin has held memberships in the Ancient Order of Hibernians Divisions 10 and 1, Friendly Sons of St Patrick, Irish American Unity Conference, Sons and Daughters of Erin and Irish Northern Aid. In 1986 he volunteered with the return of the Trenton St Patrick's Day Parade and later was installed as a Parade Committee member.

Kevin and Maryann have been recognized as Co-Grand Marshals of the 2024 St Patrick's Day Parade at Hamilton, 2024 Ancient Order of Hibernians Hibernian of the Year, NJ State AOH Corporal Michael P. Curtin "Leadership Award", 2018 Governor's Jefferson Award Honorees for Public Service "Against All Odds", 2018 NJ Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies "Inspirational Role Model Award", Trenton Catholic Academy "Alumni Making A Difference Award", Mercer County Education Association "Friend of Education Award", Marine Corps League - Trenton Detachment "Appreciation Award", Contact of Mercer County "Making A Difference Award", Public Service Electric & Gas "Recognizing Excellence in Volunteerism Award" and the Patrick Shane Biddulph Foundation "Appreciation Award". In 2018, Kevin and Maryann accepted a Joint Resolution of the New Jersey Senate and General Assembly for Recognition on behalf of City of Angels.

Kevin retired after a forty-year energy utility career with Public Service Electric and Gas Company, serving as a Governmental Account Manager and having been instrumental in the implementation of a company-wide initiative to raise awareness about prescription drug use. Promoted to management at twenty-nine, he was employed in various marketing and sales management positions and was appointed to the management negotiation team for the collective bargaining process with the Utility Co-workers Union. He served as a Delegate to the Mercer County AFL-CIO with the Office and Professional Employees International Union, Local 153, where he was shop steward, State Secretary and New Jersey State Legislative Chairman. As a volunteer utility worker, Kevin served two shifts at Ground Zero following the Sept. 11, 2001 terror attacks in New York City. Maryann retired after twenty-five years as a Teacher's Aid at Mercer County Special Services School District, where she had organized in-service presentations on mental health and substance-use disorders.

Kevin's government service began when he first won election to municipal office in 1989, where he served one four-year term on the Hamilton Township Council and was seated as the first Democrat Council President under the current form of government. He served as a Democrat County Committeeman and held various positions within the Hamilton Township Democrat Organization. He registered Republican in 2003 and was again elected to Council in 2007, serving two more terms before retiring in 2016. In January 2012, he was elected Council President and is the only known Councilmember to hold this office as both a Democrat and Republican. In November 2012, Kevin also served as Mayor of Hamilton Township. He was also Council liaison to the Hamilton Alliance Against Substance Abuse and the Hamilton Twp. Planning Board. His pride in his heritage was prevalent in the many Township Council resolutions the Councilman sponsored that recognized various Irish American organizations, events and Saint Patrick's Day parades in his community. Councilman Meara authored passage of one of the first local resolutions in America to support Joe Doherty, a political prisoner of the Northern Ireland conflict. On June 16, 2009, the Councilman also sponsored the first United Ireland resolution passed in America at the Municipal Council level. In 1999, Kevin conceived of an Irish Flag Raising to honor the Irish American community and on March 10, 2000 Hamilton Twp. began its first-ever and now annual commemoration ceremony.

In 1996, as the Democrat candidate in the Fourth Congressional District -NJ, Kevin brought Northern Ireland to the forefront of the campaign and in subsequent years his opponent, Congressman Chris Smith, became a strong supporter of Irish issues. Kevin founded the IRISH LOBBY and spent his time in Trenton and Washington D.C., attending Hearings and working with legislators to advance policy, culture and economy on Irish-American issues. His work has taken him from the State House to the White House, where he was an invitee to the White House St. Patrick's Day Receptions. He is honored to have worked with former Congressmen Peter King and Congressman Chris Smith, President Bill Clinton, Vice President Al Gore and Northern Ireland attorney Rosemary Nelson, who was murdered for her legal service to NI communities. He was a Charter member of Gov. James E McGreevey's Irish American Committee and their coordination of the Governor's Inauguration Day Parade and Northern Ireland MP Gerry Adams' visit to Drumthwacket, the Governor's residence.

At the time of the Northern Ireland Peace Process, Kevin was one of a few activists invited to the US State Department to be briefed on negotiations by the US Envoys to Northern Ireland. During the negotiations Kevin served on a planning team that was instrumental in putting Trenton, NJ on the map. He coordinated visits of dignitaries to the NJ State House, NJ Chamber of Commerce and the NJ AFL-CIO, which included US Envoy and Chief negotiator Sen. George Mitchell, Sinn Fein MPs Gerry Adams, Gerry Kelly and Pat Doherty, Boston Mayor Ray Flynn and former US Congressman Bruce Morrison.

He was a Charter member of the Mercer-Area Jaycees and was named an Outstanding Young American in 1998. He served as a Trustee on the non-profit Mount Carmel Guild of Trenton. Currently Kevin is Chairman/Founding Member and Maryann is Treasurer/Founding Member of the non-profit City of Angels NJ, Inc. They have served City of Angels in a volunteer capacity for fifteen years as Committee members, Trustees and Officers. COA was formed as a first-ever all volunteer community-based grass roots recovery center in response to the tragic June 30, 2008 overdose death of their oldest son Kevin Caley (K.C.) Meara. COA's original mission, to "help people get help", has expanded to also include advocacy. Kevin and Maryann became the face of NJ parents for Gov. Chris Christie's ReachNJ campaign to address NJ's opioid/heroin epidemic. They were keynote speakers at Gov. Christie's first Candlelight Vigil -Take a Stand for Addiction and Recovery. They hosted Gov. Christie at City of Angel's Hamilton office for a roundtable with parents whose sons/daughters who were also lost opioid/heroin overdoses.

Kevin was a New Jersey Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse appointee, where he served on the Overdose Prevention Task Force and led a COA team to meet with the Massachusetts Department of Health for the development of a Narcan Deployment initiative for Mercer County. Under their leadership, COA became a certified training agency through the Addiction Professionals Certification Board of NJ and was an early advocate of recovery coaching, where as a CCAR Recovery Coach Professional/Trainer and Interventionist Kevin and their trainers have instructed over five-hundred recovery coaches. City of Angels supports an amateur baseball program, the COA Angels, an 18+ Championship team whose uniforms were gifted by the MLB Los Angeles Angels after being worn in the 2011 MLB season. The COA Angel's partnership with the MLB minor league franchise Trenton Thunder produced a MLB first-ever Narcan give away at the August 13, 2022 Trenton Thunder vs West Virginia Black Bears game.

In 2016, Kevin and Maryann were invited by the White House as keynotes to address the first HIDTA (High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas) –Heroin Response Strategy Symposium at Towson University and later traveled extensively to Washington DC, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Baltimore Maryland, North Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Virginia, West Virginia and Ohio advocating for action and funding for the heroin/opioid epidemic. This included a keynote panelist at the Baltimore screening of the FBI's documentary Slaying the Dragon. They have collaborated with the various HIDTAs and introduced ODMAP to New Jersey to improve NJ State Police state-wide Drug Monitoring Initiative. Kevin and Maryann's journey has taken them from KC's bedroom to the White House East Room. In 2016, Kevin attended the White House Signing Ceremony for the 21st Century Cures Act, where he met with President Barack Obama. In October 2017, Kevin attended President Donald Trump's Public Health Emergency declaration. In addition, Kevin was invited back to address both the 2018 White House Opioid Summit with President Donald Trump and the Department of Justice Opioid Summit: A Call To Action, organized by then Attorney General Jeff Sessions. Kevin and Maryann have worked with each of America's last four Drug Czars, White House Office of National Drug Control Policy Directors Botticelli, Baum, Carroll, Dr Gupta and participated in various parent roundtables at the White House. WH ONDCP Acting Director Richard Baum, invited Kevin and Maryann to organize his attendance at a roundtable discussion at COA's Hamilton office on New Jersey's response to the heroin/opioid epidemic. In 2022, Kevin met at the DEA Washington DC Headquarters with Administrator Anne Milgram for a symposium of parents to discuss the fentanyl overdose crisis and later with US Drug Czar Dr Rahul Gupta for a discussion on International Overdose Awareness Day. Kevin and Maryann were also keynotes at the 2023 HIDTA National Summit -Overdose Response Strategy, Moving Forward with a Purpose in Pittsburg, PA.

In 2012, COA began supporting the Slattery Detachment of the Marine Corps League of NJ, where Kevin made trips to Andrews AFB ASF, USMC Camp Lejeune's Wounded Warrior Battalion and monthly to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda to visit with injured servicemen and servicewomen. From this experience COA established their Warrior Down –No Vet Left Behind program to address veteran's issues, which is now expanding into the Fr. Vincent R. Capodanno Veteran's Research Therapeutics. This wellness initiative will encompass leading-edge therapies, with a concentrate on neurogenesis, that are not readily accessible to our veterans with PTSD/TBI/substance use disorders. Since it's formation, Warrior Down members have advocated for better veteran support services and testified at public hearings of the New Jersey Veterans PTSD Task Force on Veteran's Treatments Courts and NJ Assembly Military and Veterans Affairs Committee Hearing on mental health.

Kevin has done considerable genealogical studies on his Irish ancestry and has traced the Moylan side to the “Moylans of Cork”, where he discovered that General Stephen Moylan came to the United States in 1773 to fight in the American Revolution. Moylan became George Washington’s Aide-de-camp and secretary, 2nd Quarter Master General of the US and founder of the Friendly Sons of Saint Patrick in Philadelphia. Moylan is credited as the first Founder to use the phrase “United States of America”. The Moylan family ancestral home in Fermoy outside of Scranton PA, played host to such notables as John Malone FBI NY Field Office Director and next-in-charge to FBI Director J Edgar Hoover, Fr Edward “Monk” Malloy -16th President of the University of Notre Dame and Saint John Neumann during his Diocesan trips to Scranton while then Archbishop of the Philadelphia Diocese. Of interest...Kevin has met our last four Presidents in the White House.