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Ward Irish Music Archives Announces Incorporation and New Mission Statement

MILWAUKEE (JANUARY 2022) - The Ward Irish Music Archives (WIMA) is pleased to announce its new incorporation status and mission statement, along with an initial slate of board members. Beginning last year, WIMA began the process of incorporating as a subsidiary of CelticMKE and becoming its own entity. The organization incorporated as the Ward Irish Music Archives but are still legally associated with and supported by CelticMKE. This allows them to protect their assets and engage many other individuals that have a passion for all forms of Irish music. As their own entity they will be able to secure outside funding for WIMA.

WIMA's new mission statement is:

The Ward Irish Music Archives (WIMA) collects, promotes, preserves, and disseminates Irish and Irish American musics in all their forms. WIMA makes these cultural resources available to researchers, artists, and the general public now and into the future for the purposes of teaching, scholarship, and practice.

The new board of directors includes officers: President John Daley, Secretary Bernie McCartan, Treasurer Greg Baran and six Community directors: Tes Slominski, Danny Diamond, Scott Spencer, Aileen Dillane, William Fliss and Dan Neely. Non Voting members are Mike Mitchell, Executive Director of CelticMKE, and Barry Stapleton, Director of WIMA.

Jeff Ksiazek, who has been with WIMA for 13 years, is the Senior Archivist. WIMA employs two part time archivists, whose positions are funded by the Emigrant Support Programme from Ireland. Many volunteers help at WIMA throughout the year.

The Ward Irish Music Archives debuted in 1992 after Milwaukee Irish Fest founder Ed Ward visited the Irish Traditional Music Archives (ITMA) in Ireland and found his grandfather's books in their collections. Upon returning to Milwaukee, he asked the board to support establishing WIMA in honor of his grandfather.

WIMA has since grown to be the largest Irish and Irish American music archive in North America. Over 60,000 objects are currently held in a variety of collections. WIMA's collections include traditional music to rock and classical music. Its earliest object is from the eighteenth century.

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The organization maintains a robust online presence to bring its materials to the wider world. WIMA has released three [digital collections](#) - the Dunn Family Collection, Irish Sheet Music Archives and the Irish Fest Scrapbook. WIMA also shares highlights from the collection through their social media accounts on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and SoundCloud.

As they approach 30 years of archiving, WIMA would like to thank all of those who worked so hard to build the organization into what it is today. “We are extremely grateful for all of your support whether it be volunteering, supporting us financially or by engaging with our resources,” stated Barry Stapleton, the Director of WIMA. “We are very excited about our future and our new board of directors.”

WIMA is located in the CelticMKE Center in Wauwatosa, WI. Learn more about WIMA, browse through their collections, and more by visiting wardirishmusicarchives.com.

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