



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**November 15, 2023**

**STATEMENT BY FRED RYAN,  
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF THE  
RONALD REAGAN PRESIDENTIAL FOUNDATION AND INSTITUTE  
ON THE DEATH OF RICK AHEARN**



Simi Valley, California – The Reagan Foundation and Institute mourns the passing of Frederick (Rick) Ahearn, a long-time and trusted friend to President and Mrs. Reagan.

Rick was the consummate Irish American – so deeply grateful of his Irish heritage yet always so proud to be an American.

President and Mrs. Reagan adored Rick for his wit and for his wisdom in a decades-long friendship that began early in the 1980 Presidential campaign. They could always count on Rick to make the right strategic decision when the stakes were high – or to diffuse a tense situation with his unique Irish wit.

Rick Ahearn was by President Reagan’s side through moments of joy and moments of tragedy. As a quintessential Irish-American, like President Reagan, the two basked in their heritage while visiting Ballyporeen, Ireland in 1984 and raising a glass at the newly named “Ronald Reagan Pub”. But Rick was

also by President Reagan's side on that fateful day in March 1981 during the assassination attempt on the President's life. In his [description of the day](#), he was just steps in front of the President, leading him to the limousine. When the gun went off, he thought it was firecrackers. And even though he was struck in the left eye and left cheek by shrapnel from the limousine's window, when he saw James Brady go down "like a sack of potatoes," his quick reactions are credited for saving James Brady's life.

When President Reagan passed away in 2004, Rick Ahearn volunteered his time to help plan and manage the Washington, D.C. and Simi Valley, CA funerals. It was Rick who made the decision to leave Ronald Reagan's riding boots scuffed, but not dusty, for the stirrups of the riderless horse for the caisson procession to the Capitol, knowing that that is how Ronald Reagan would have worn them. After Rick's wife died in 2007, Rick was quoted as saying about former First Lady Nancy Reagan, "We shared a lot of tears. She was trying to encourage me and telling me what it was like for her to lose her husband."

All of us who had the chance to know Rick Ahearn are better for it.

We join Rick's family, his beloved Maria, and vast circle of friends in a fond farewell and know that there just may be an extra rainbow in the sky over Ireland today.

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