



## 'The Fighting Irishmen' On View At Boston College's Burns Library

CHESTNUT HILL, MASS. — The popular exhibition "Fighting Irishmen: Celebrating Celtic Prizefighters 1820 to Present" makes its Massachusetts debut at Boston College, presented in collaboration with New York's Irish Arts Center. The exhibit is on view at BC's John J. Burns Library of Rare Books and Special Collections through August.

"Fighting Irishmen" com-

prises an eclectic collection of boxing artifacts, including prints, photographs, paintings, robes, gloves, boxing bags, films and other items that offer "a veritable stroll down memory lane for fight fans and historians alike," exhibit organizers say.

New England boxers are prominent in the exhibit, including legendary world heavyweight champion John L. Sullivan of Roxbury, Mass.,

who reportedly attended Boston College for a short time, and three-time New England Golden Gloves winner "Irish" Micky Ward of Lowell, Mass., the subject of a 2007 biography by WCVB-TV and ESPN sports anchor Bob Halloran and of the upcoming feature film *The Fighter*.

"The Center for Irish Programs at Boston College and the Burns Library are pleased to be able to host this extraor-

dinary exhibit," said Robert O'Neill, director of Boston College's Burns Library. "It offers visitors a unique glimpse at the role prizefighting played in the history of Irish America, especially as seen through the Boston connection from John L. Sullivan to 'Irish' Micky Ward.

"All the major Irish boxers from the Nineteenth Century to the present are represented in the exhibit," O'Neill added. "In addition to names like Sullivan, 'Gentleman' Jim Corbett, James 'Cinderella Man' Braddock, Gene Tunney, Jack Dempsey, Billy Conn and Gerry Cooney, the exhibit even includes material on Mohammed Ali, who has Irish ancestry."

Among the artifacts and pictures on display are John L. Sullivan's fur coat, a blazer

Dan Donnelly, who was slated to be inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame this summer as part of the "pioneer" group.

The exhibit also includes a heavy bag from Gene Tunney's training camp, equipment from current female fighter Maureen Shea — used for training actress Hilary Swank for the film *Million Dollar Baby* — and fight equipment from Ireland's John Duddy. The exhibit also displays three original oil paintings from the Tunney collection by the artist Mahonri Young, Brigham Young's grandson.

Visitor can also view video of historic fight films provided by the Boxing Hall of Champions during tours of the exhibit.

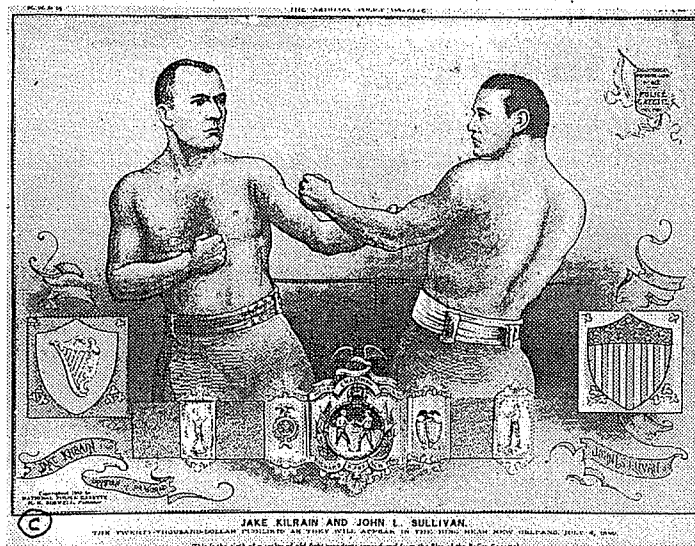
"The bravery and tenacity of

specially made for Jack Dempsey, photographs from the archives of *Sports Illustrated* magazine, Charlie Nash's Olympic jersey when he was fighting for Ireland, photographs of the classic Micky Ward vs Arturo Gatti trilogy and historic photos of heavyweight champs Sullivan and Corbett.

Among the items on display is one of the oldest and rarest pieces of sports memorabilia in existence: the mummified right arm of Nineteenth Century Irish prizefighting legend

the Gaels, especially as heroic warriors, are renowned throughout history," writes "Fighting Irishmen" curator James J. Houlihan in the exhibit catalog. "The champions we celebrate in [this exhibit] exemplify this great tradition. Their dedication, perseverance and triumph over adversity have set fine examples for those who follow in their footsteps."

The Burns Library is at 140 Commonwealth Avenue. For information, 617-552-3282 or [www.bc.edu/burns](http://www.bc.edu/burns).



A reproduction of an old woodcut from the files of the *National Police Gazette* of an advance notice of a \$25,000 fight scheduled for July 8, 1889, outside New Orleans between Jake Kilrain and John L. Sullivan.