



Irish-American Heritage Month

**EAST CENTRAL ISD PROUDLY CELEBRATES THE CONTRIBUTIONS THAT
IRISH-AMERICANS HAVE MADE TO OUR NATION'S HISTORY.**

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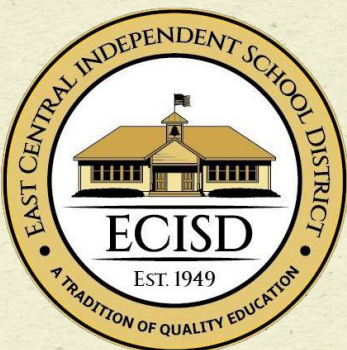
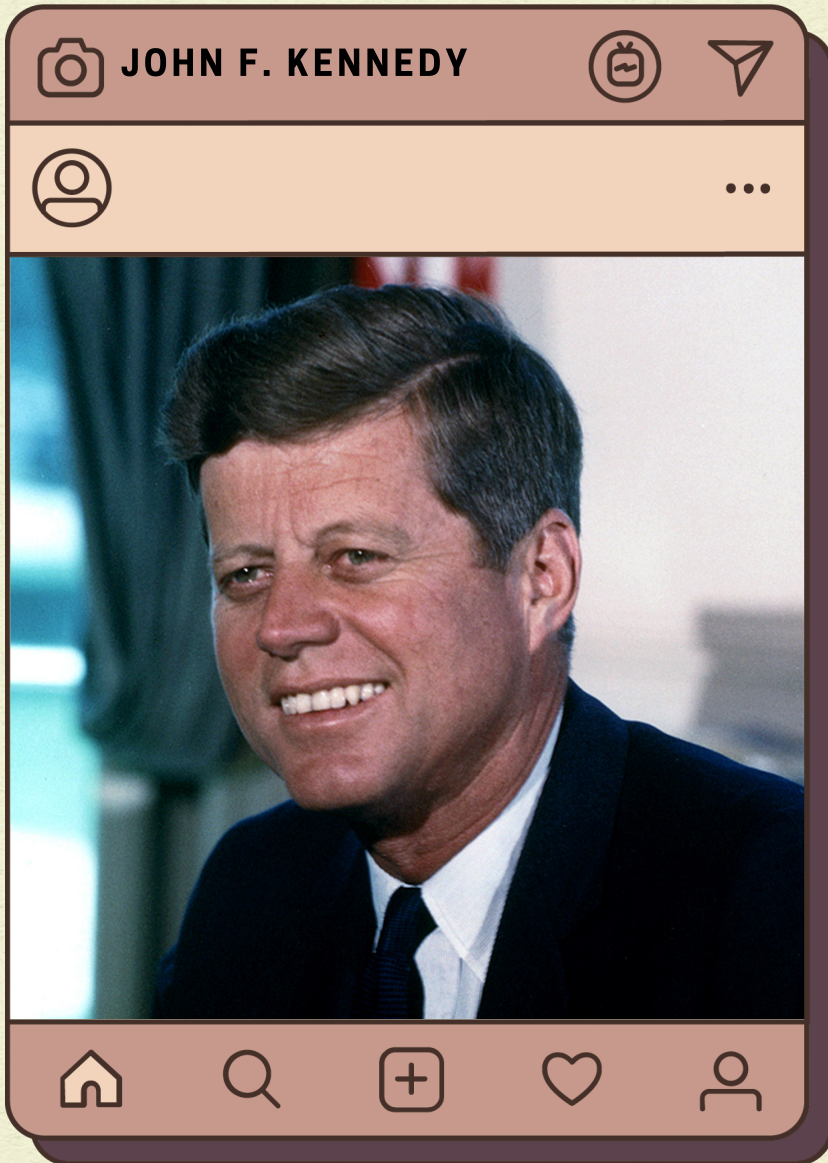
IRISH-AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

MARCH 2022

John Fitzgerald Kennedy (May 29, 1917 – November 22, 1963), often referred to by his initials JFK, was an American politician who served as the 35th president of the United States from 1961 until his assassination in 1963. Kennedy served at the height of the Cold War, and the majority of his work as president concerning relations with the Soviet Union and Cuba.

As the youngest-ever elected President of the United States (age 43), he was also the first Irish-Catholic president of the United States. JFK averted nuclear war through his negotiations with Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev on Oct. 28, 1962. Known as the "Cuban Missile Crisis," it started a couple of weeks earlier due to the placement of nuclear missiles in Cuba by the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union agreed to dismantle its weapons in Cuba and bring them back while the United States agreed that they would not invade Cuba without provocation.

Other notable achievements was signing into law the Equal Pay Act of 1963 to abolish wage disparity based on sex; Executive Order 10925 which required government contracts to take affirmative action to ensure all employees are treated equally; Executive Order 11063 which banned segregation in federally funded housing; and his work to provide equal access to public schools and other facilities while providing greater protection of voting rights became part of the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964.



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Let's dance! Michael Ryan Flatley (born July 16, 1958) is an Irish-American dancer, choreographer, and musician. He became internationally known for Irish dance shows Riverdance, Lord of the Dance, Feet of Flames, and Celtic Tiger Live. Flatley's shows have played to more than 60 million people in 60 countries and have grossed more than \$1 billion.

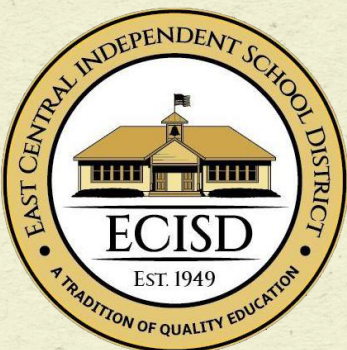
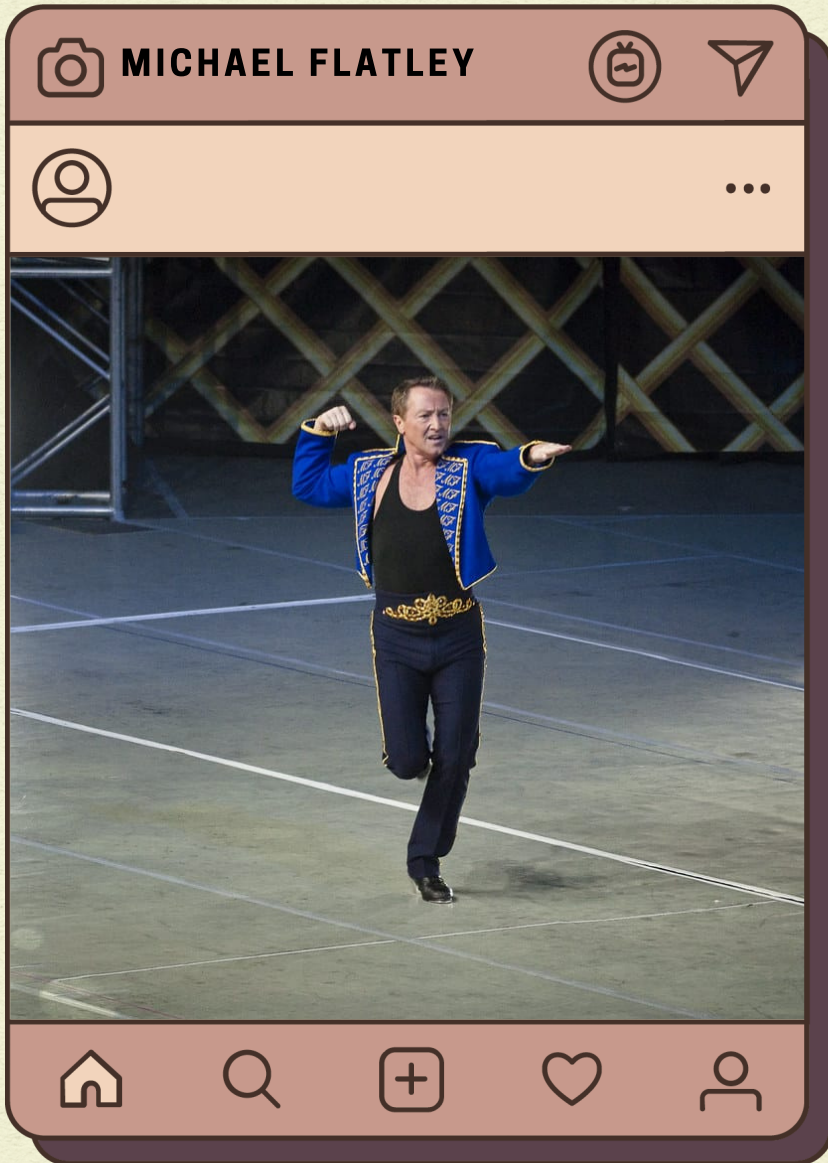
Flatley is credited with reinventing traditional Irish dance by incorporating new rhythms, syncopation, and upper body movements, which were previously absent from the dance. He is in the Guinness World Records for tap dancing 35 times per second and his feet were at one time insured for \$57.6 million.

Flatley was born in Chicago to Irish immigrant parents. His father was from Co. Sligo while his mother from Co. Carlow. They arrived in the United States 11 years before he was born and sent their talented son to Irish dancing classes from a young age.

Over the years Flatley has had an extremely successful career, giving Irish dancing a fresh new appeal.

He inherited his passion and no doubt some of his raw talents from his dance champion grandmother and set the bar for many budding performers.

Flatley could dance in the boxing ring as well. In 1975, he competed in the amateur boxing Chicago Golden Gloves tournament.



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Eileen Marie Collins (born November 19, 1956) is a retired NASA astronaut and United States Air Force colonel. A former military instructor and test pilot, Collins was the first female pilot and first female commander of a Space Shuttle. She was awarded several medals for her work. Colonel Collins has logged 38 days 8 hours and 20 minutes in outer space. Collins retired on May 1, 2006, to pursue private interests, including service as a board member of USAA.

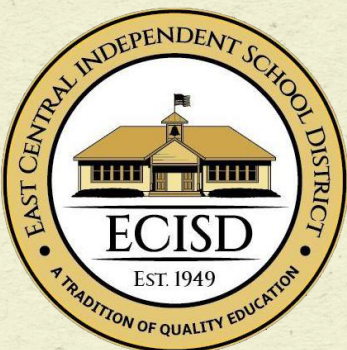
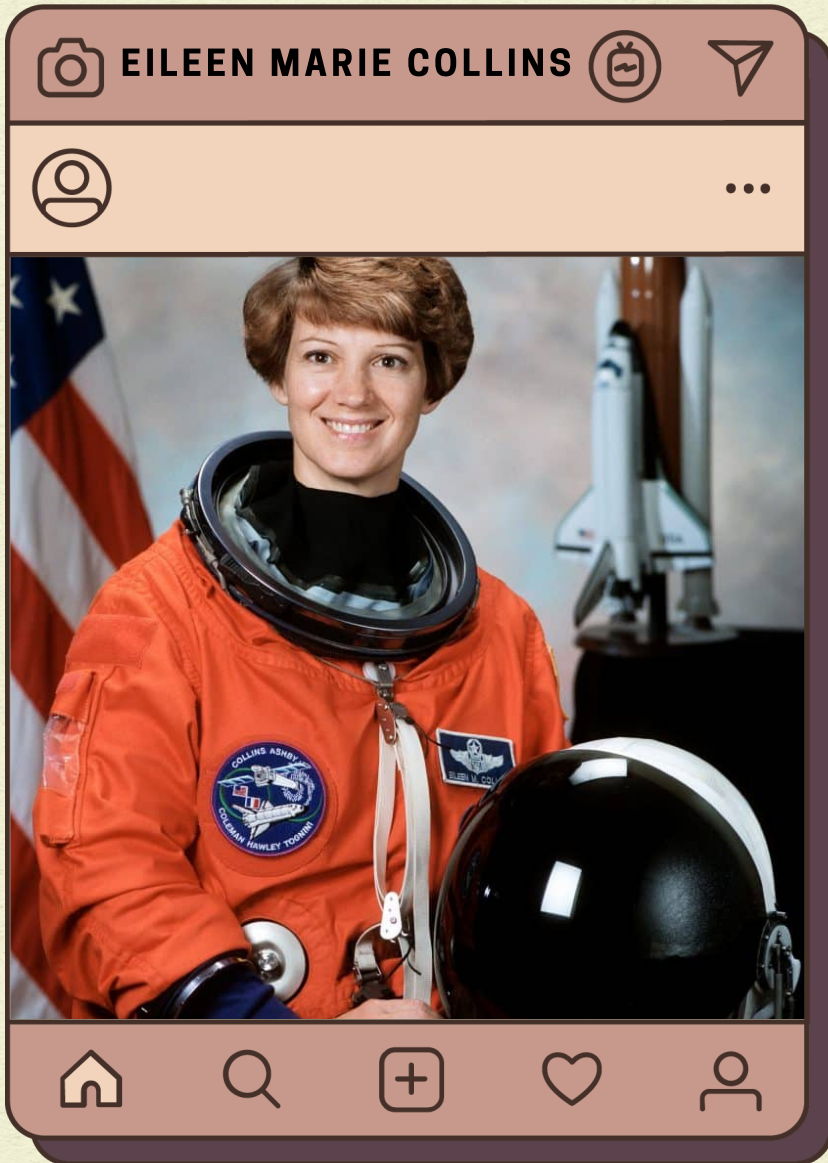
In 1979 she made history when she became the Air Force's first-ever woman flight instructor.

Collins was born in New York to immigrant parents from Co. Cork. Money was tight during her childhood but her parents encouraged her dreams by taking regular trips to the airport to watch the planes.

As soon as she was old enough she started waitressing to fund her own flying lessons and persisted with her goals until she succeeded.

Since her 2007 election, Collins has served as a USAA director, Vice Chair of USAA's Risk Committee, and a member of USAA's Member and Technology and Nominating and Governance committees.

Collins has been inducted into the National Women's Hall Of Fame. She has also been recognized by Encyclopedia Britannica as one of the top 300 women in history who have changed the world.



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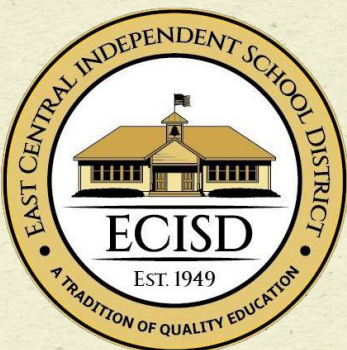
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Maureen O'Hara (17 August 1920 – 24 October 2015) was an Irish actress and singer. She was a famous redhead who was known for playing passionate, but sensible heroines, often in westerns and adventure films. On numerous occasions, she worked with director John Ford and longtime friend John Wayne.

O'Hara grew up in Dublin in a Catholic family and aspired to become an actress from a very young age. She trained with the Rathmines Theatre Company from the age of 10 and at the Abbey Theatre from the age of 14. She was given a screen test, which was deemed unsatisfactory, but Charles Laughton saw potential and arranged for her to co-star with him in Alfred Hitchcock's *Jamaica Inn* in 1939. She moved to Hollywood the same year to appear with him in the production of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, and was given a contract by RKO Pictures. From there, she went on to enjoy a long and highly successful career, and acquired the nickname "The Queen of Technicolor."

In November 2014, she was presented with an Honorary Academy Award with the inscription "To Maureen O'Hara, one of Hollywood's brightest stars, whose inspiring performances glowed with passion, warmth and strength". In 2020, she was ranked number 1 on The Irish Times list of Ireland's greatest film actors.



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Francis McCourt (August 19, 1930 – July 19, 2009) was an Irish-American teacher and writer. He won a Pulitzer Prize for his book *Angela's Ashes*, a tragicomic memoir of the misery and squalor of his childhood.

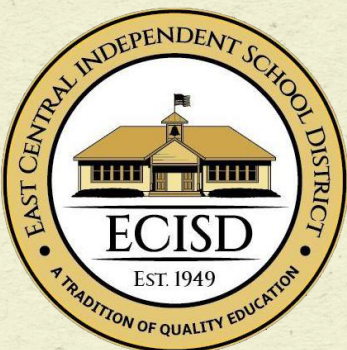
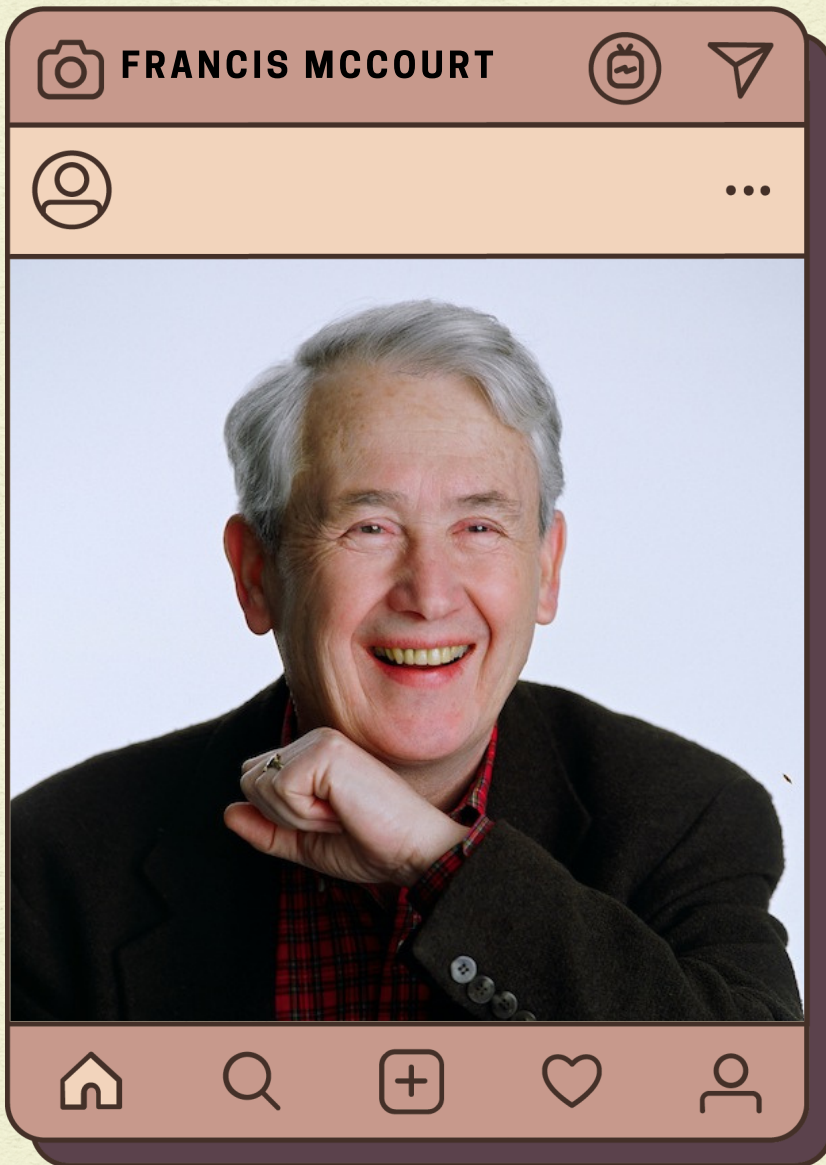
McCourt was born in New York City's Brooklyn borough, on August 19, 1930, the eldest child of Irish Catholic immigrants.

Despite living in Brooklyn, New York, McCourt's immigrant parents decided to return to Ireland but ended up worse off than where they had left.

His father, a troubled alcoholic from Co. Antrim, eventually abandoned the family while his mother continued to struggle to feed her four remaining children without any money.

The novel, which was later shown on screen, caused controversy among the Irish community but to many natives, McCourt was a brave hero who revealed the truth about the slums of Ireland and the cruel judgments that were often bestowed on starving families.

McCourt was a member of the National Arts Club and was a recipient of the Award of Excellence from The International Center in New York. In 1998, McCourt was honored as the Irish American of the Year by Irish America magazine. In 1999, McCourt received the Golden Plate Award of the American Academy of Achievement.



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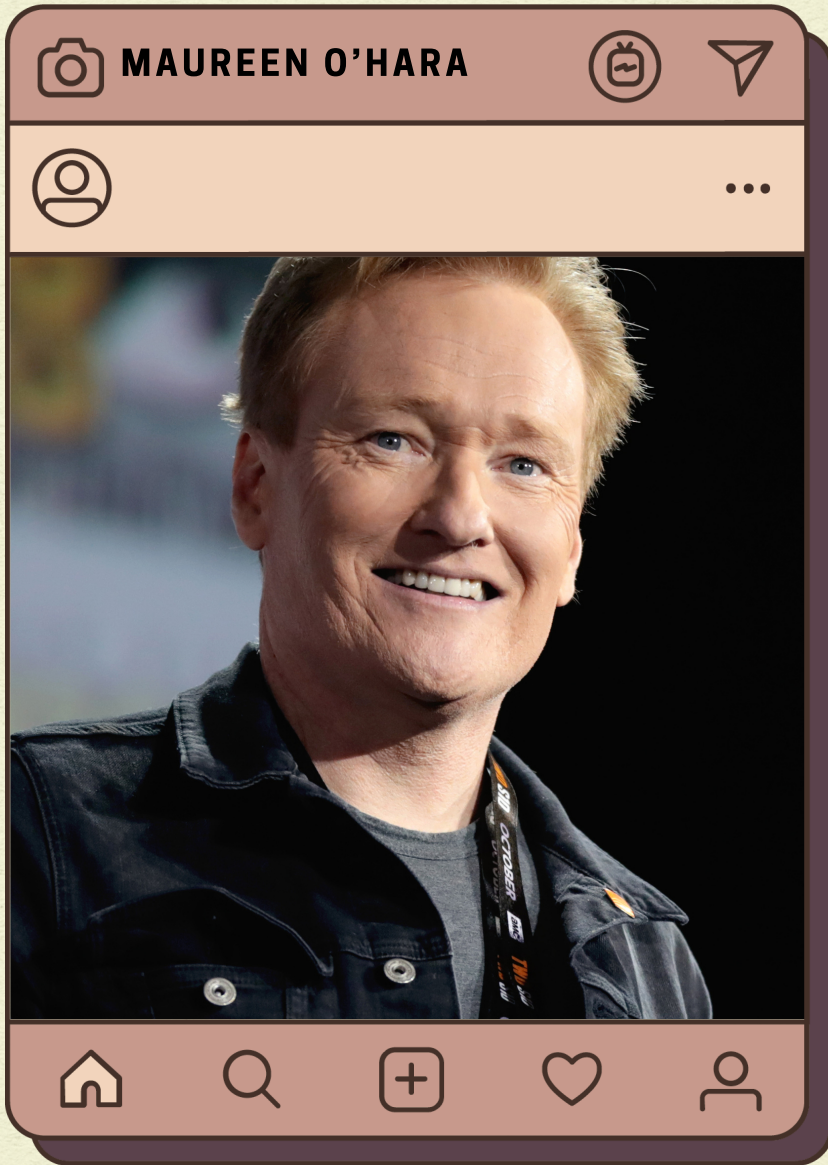
Conan O'Brien (born April 18, 1963) is best known for hosting the late-night talk shows Late Night with Conan O'Brien, The Tonight Show with Conan O'Brien, and since 2010, Conan on the cable channel TBS.

Prior to his hosting career, he was a writer for Saturday Night Live and The Simpsons.

Born in Brookline, Massachusetts, O'Brien was raised in an Irish Catholic family. He served as president of The Harvard Lampoon while attending Harvard University, and was a writer for the sketch comedy series Not Necessarily the News. After writing for several comedy shows in Los Angeles, he joined the writing staff of Saturday Night Live. O'Brien was a writer and producer for The Simpsons for two seasons until he was commissioned by NBC to take over David Letterman's position as host of Late Night in 1993. A virtual unknown to the public, his show defied the odds and was highly regarded by the time of his departure in 2009.

Afterward, O'Brien relocated from New York to Los Angeles to host his own incarnation of The Tonight Show for seven months until network politics prompted a host change in 2010.

Conan has won four Primetime Emmy Awards and six Writers Guild of American Awards. Most recently, has won two iHeartRadio Podcast Awards for his podcast Conan O'Brien Needs a Friend.



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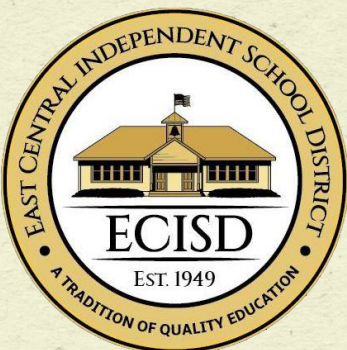
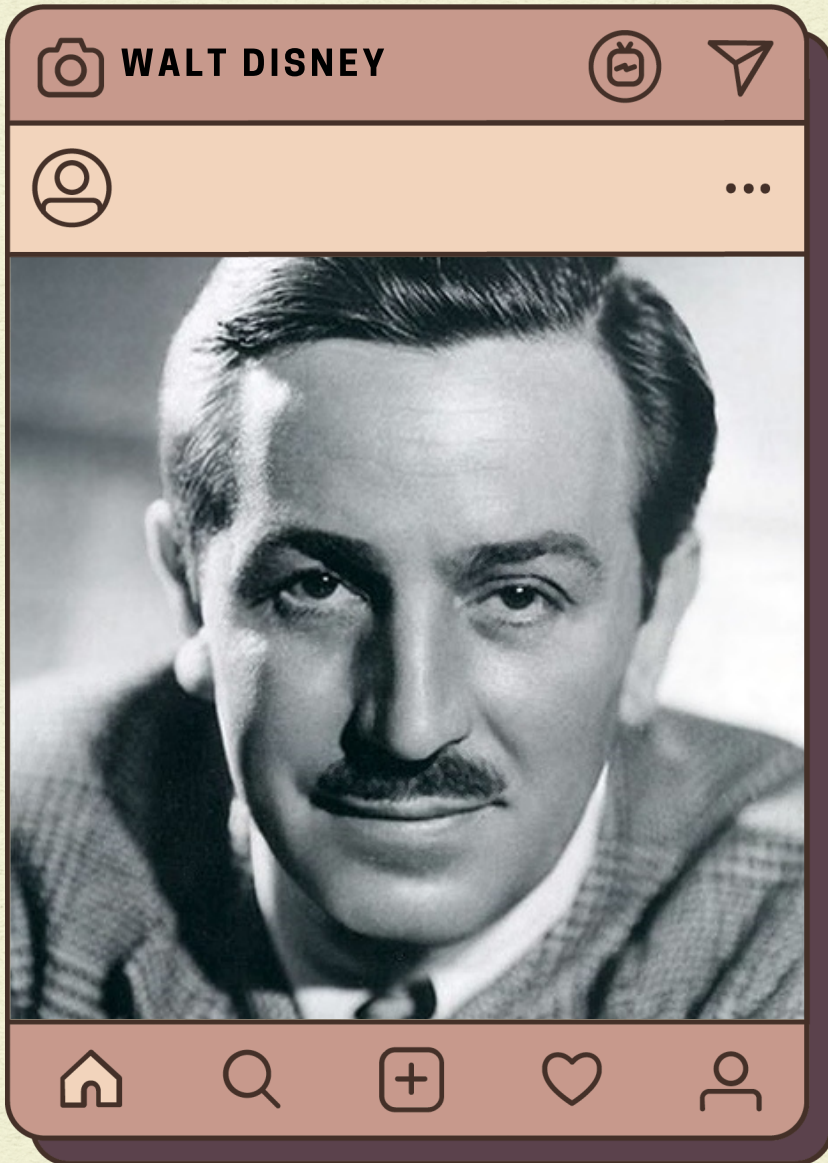
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Walter Elias Disney was an American entrepreneur, animator, writer, voice actor and film producer. A pioneer of the American animation industry, he introduced several developments in the production of cartoons. As a film producer, Disney holds the record for most Academy Awards earned by an individual, having won 22 Oscars from 59 nominations. He was presented with two Golden Globe Special Achievement Awards and an Emmy Award, among other honors. Several of his films are included in the National Film Registry by the Library of Congress.

Walt's father Elias Disney was born in the Province of Canada, to Irish parents. Walt was born in Chicago, but moved to California as a young man to set up the Disney Brothers Studio. Disney developed an early interest in drawing. He took art classes as a boy and got a job as a commercial illustrator at the age of 18.

Walt developed the character Mickey Mouse in 1928, his first highly popular success; he also provided the voice for his creation in the early years. As the studio grew, Disney became more adventurous, introducing synchronized sound, full-color three-strip Technicolor, feature-length cartoons and technical developments in cameras.

In the 1950s, Disney expanded into the amusement park industry, and in July 1955 he opened Disneyland in Anaheim, California. In 1965, he began development of another theme park, Disney World, in Orlando, Florida.



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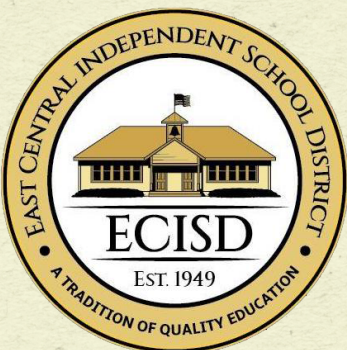
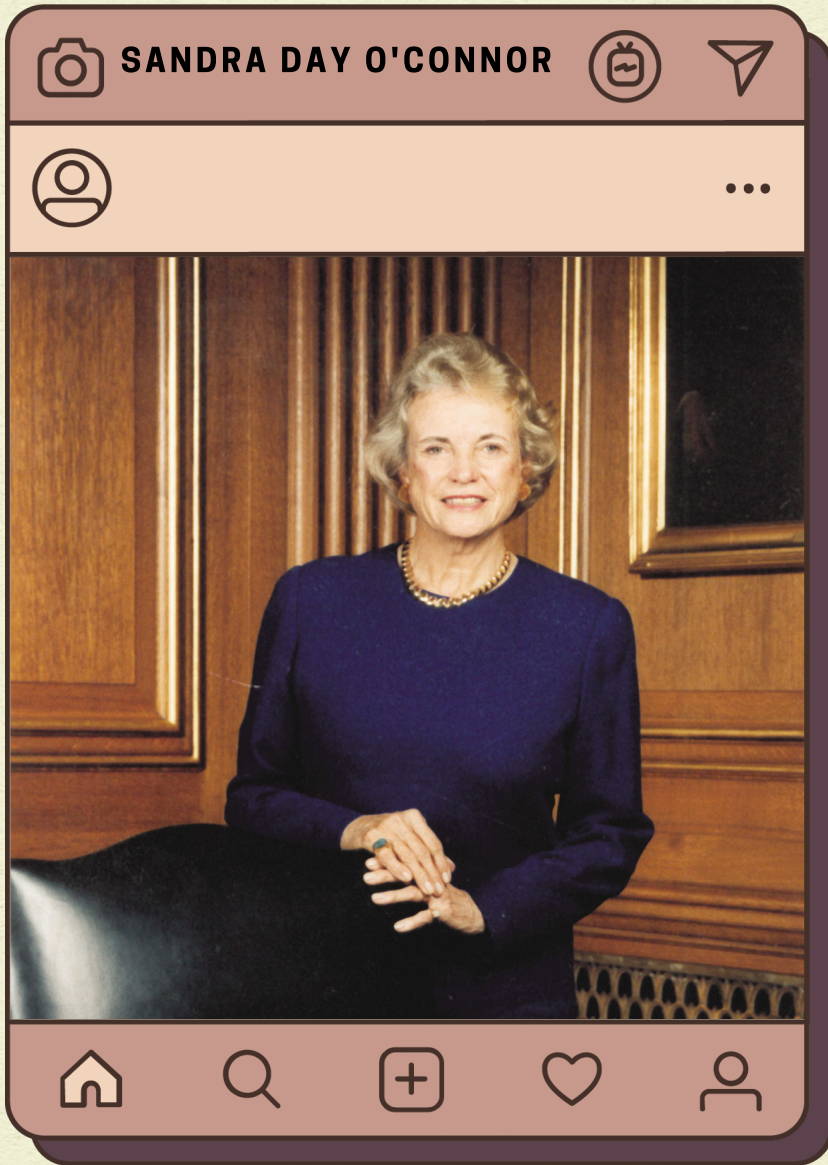
Sandra Day O'Connor (born March 26, 1930) is a retired attorney, politician, and the first woman associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, a position she held from 1981 until her retirement in 2006. She was the first woman nominated and confirmed.

Nominated by President Ronald Reagan, she was considered the swing vote for the Rehnquist Court and the beginning of the Roberts Court.

Prior to O'Connor's tenure on the Court, she was a judge and an elected official in Arizona, serving as the first female majority leader of a state senate as the Republican leader in the Arizona Senate. Upon her nomination to the Court, O'Connor was confirmed unanimously by the Senate. On July 1, 2005, she announced her intention to retire effective upon the confirmation of a successor.

She often wrote concurring opinions that limited the reach of the majority holding. Her majority opinions in landmark cases include *Grutter v. Bollinger* and *Hamdi v. Rumsfeld*. She also wrote in part the per curiam majority opinion in *Bush v. Gore*, and was one of three co-authors of the lead opinion in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*.

The Texan has been named by several publications as one of the most powerful women in the world. On August 12, 2009, she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Barack Obama.



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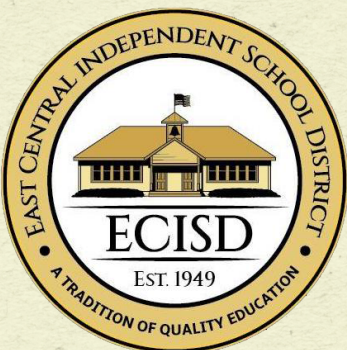
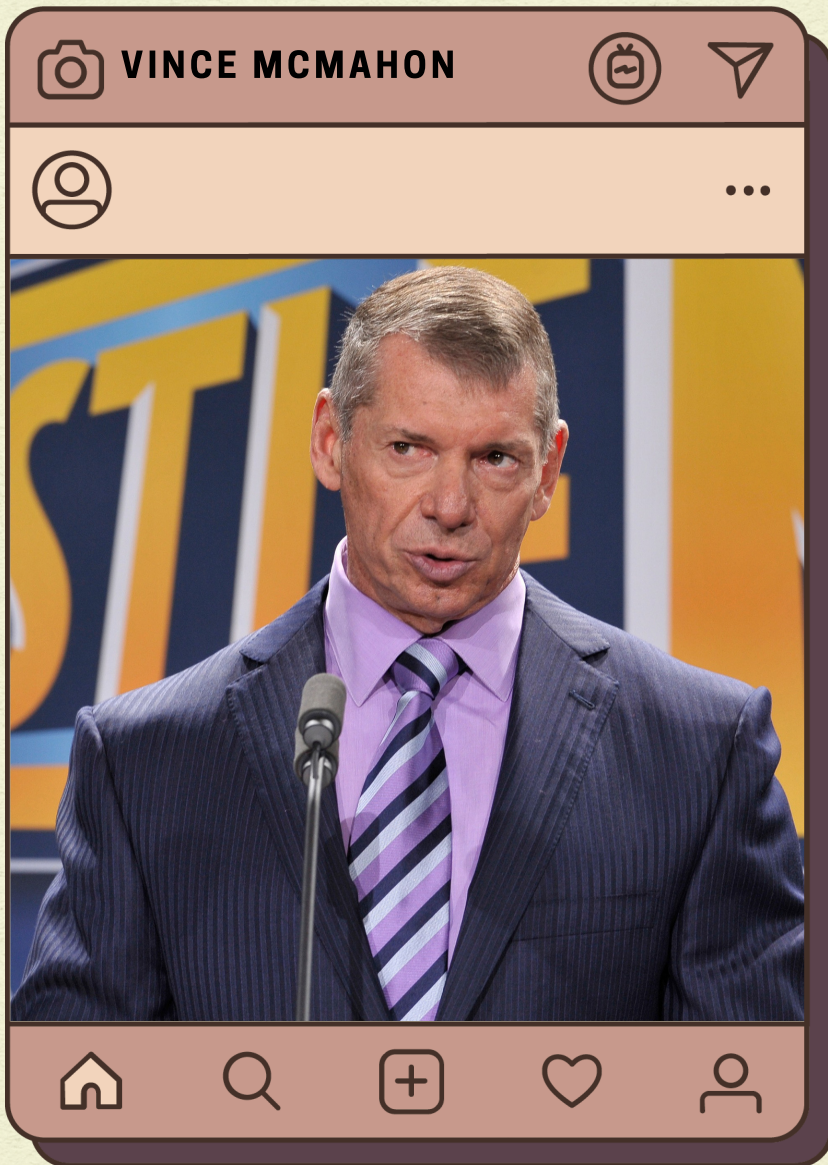
Vincent McMahon (born August 24, 1945) is an American professional wrestling promoter and executive, American football executive, and media proprietor currently serving as the chairman and CEO of WWE, and the founder and owner of Alpha Entertainment.

McMahon was born in Pinehurst, North Carolina, and graduated from East Carolina University with a degree in business in 1968. McMahon's paternal grandfather was promoter Roderick James "Jess" McMahon, whose parents were Irish immigrants from County Galway. His paternal grandmother, Rose Davis, was also of Irish descent.

He worked for the WWE for his father as a commentator and he assumed control of the company in 1982; McMahon saw the commercial potential of monopolizing the industry, which previously operated as separate fiefdoms across the United States. This led to the development of the annual WrestleMania, which has since become the most successful professional wrestling event in history.

Outside of wrestling, McMahon joint-owned and operated the XFL, a football league, twice; both iterations folded after a single season. He also headed the short-lived World Bodybuilding Federation, and co-owns the clothing brand Tapout.

WWE is now a publicly-traded company that broadcasts to more than 180 countries in 28 languages and can be seen in 900 million television households worldwide each week.



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