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LOCAL BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY LEADER WINS NATIONAL AWARD

*Bob Gessler is awarded the John F. Kennedy Memorial Medal at National AOH
Convention*

NEW ORLEANS, LA – July 26, 2008- At the 94th Annual Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH) Convention in New Orleans LA, a local business owner and community leader was award the John F. Kennedy Memorial Medal. The Medal is the highest honor this national Irish organization bestows and only twenty-nine (29) have been awarded since its inception in 1966. Awardees include Colonel James McDivitt, U.S.A.F. Astronaut of Gemini IV and Apollo IX, Actor Pat O'Brien, Mayors Richard J. Daley of Chicago and Raymond L. Flynn of Boston, His Eminence John Cardinal O'Connor, Archbishop of New York, Nobel Prize winner John Hume among many other prominent Irish and Irish-American dignitaries.

The Medal was presented at the convention's closing dinner to an audience of over 1,500 including 900 delegates from around the country. In a statement on the AOH's website, newly elected President Seamus Boyle said, "The highlight of the award banquet was the awarding of the John F. Kennedy medal to this year's winner, Robert Gessler from Philadelphia... As a friend of Bob's for many years it was my pleasure to introduce and make some remarks about him including many of his accomplishments. There were so many things Bob did for the AOH that it was a simple task for me to give my remarks. Good luck Bob in any of your future endeavors and we know you are always there for the AOH and the community."

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John F. Kennedy Memorial Medal

Gessler was active in bringing the Irish Memorial, located at Front and Chestnut Streets to Philadelphia, (www.irishmemorial.org) serving as a board member of the organization for over ten years. Gessler was instrumental in garnering substantial governmental and community funding, including support from then Mayor Ed Rendell for the project. He continues to serve on this board and believes that Glenna Goodacre's sculpture is not only a tribute to the indefatigable spirit of the Irish but to all that journeyed to make America their home.

It was during the fund raising for the Irish Memorial that as the Philadelphia County Board President, 1995-2006, that Gessler conceived the Hibernian Hunger Project, (HHP) The HHP began as a way to raise consciousness about hunger in the city and to place more of a focus on community service on St. Patrick's Day and less on revelry, while memorializing those who starved during the years 1845-1850 during the Great Hunger in Ireland (An Gorta Mor). The Project grew and now feeds over 20,000 Philadelphians throughout the year through organized cook-ins and non-perishable food collections. In 2003, the Project was expanded to 40 states nationwide and through the hard work of Hibernians throughout the country now feeds thousands in every state.

His commitment the motto of the AOH - Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity - is evident in all of the projects that he works on throughout year. He is dedicated to education, charitable works and economic renewal in Philadelphia's neighborhoods. He founded and chaired the Hibernian Community Development Corporation, a nonprofit corporation which renovated homes for first time buyers and new families. Gessler has also started scholarship funds for local high school students, hosted the 2004 AOH/LAOH National Convention in Philadelphia, is a former Board Member for the Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians and served on the Quality of Life and Travel and Tourism subcommittees for Mayor Street's Transition Team.

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He continues to serve the community as the 2nd Vice President for the St. Patrick's Day Observance Association, the organization that oversees Philadelphia's St. Patrick's Day Parade, the oldest in the nation. He belongs to a number of civic and charitable organizations and is currently working with a dedicated group of individuals hoping to bring an Irish Film Festival to the City of Philadelphia.

Bob has been married to his wife Kathleen for the past 19 years, and resides in the Torresdale section of Philadelphia. He is a state Certified General Real Estate Appraiser in PA, NJ and DE. He was appointed to a 3 year term to the Commercial, Industrial and Institutional Committee for the Pennsylvania Association of Realtors and is a member of the Commercial section of the National Association of Realtors and an associate member of the Appraisal Institute. His firm, The Gessler Group, Inc., specializes in the consultation on and the appraisal of commercial real estate.