

## **PRESS RELEASE**

August 2, 2012

### **ESSEX COUNTY FREEHOLDERS CELEBRATE THE LIFE OF THE LATE PAUL J. “PJ” MacDONALD FORMER BELLEVILLE COUNCILMAN & PROUD IRISHMAN**



Freeholder Brendan Gill of Montclair (right) presented the Board’s In Memoriam commendation to the family of the late Belleville Councilman Paul J. “PJ” MacDonald during the Wednesday, August 1<sup>st</sup>, meeting held at the Hall of Records. Pictured above are PJ’s widow, Janet (center, holding Commendation), and daughters (from left to right) Coleen MacDonald, Aileen Millar and Sheila Lisi. PHOTO BY GLEN FRIESON

(Newark, NJ) – During its Wednesday, August 1<sup>st</sup>, meeting held at the Hall of Records, the Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders celebrated the life of the late Belleville Councilman Paul J. “PJ” MacDonald, who passed away on January 12, 2011, at the age of 69. Freeholder Brendan Gill of Montclair presented the Board’s In Memoriam commendation to PJ’s widow, Janet, and their daughters, Coleen MacDonald, Aileen Millar and Sheila Lisi.

Remarking that he thinks of PJ MacDonald each and every day, Freeholder Gill paid tribute to him by saying, “PJ was a public servant in the best sense of the word.” Noting their shared pride in their Irish heritage, Gill went on to say, “As a young Irish-American elected official, I looked up to PJ. In the Irish-American community, public service is all about doing something greater than oneself, and PJ was the embodiment of that.”

Speaking on behalf of her mother and sisters, Aileen Millar thanked the Board for honoring her father and reminisced about how proud the entire family had been back in 2001 when they were in the Freeholder Chambers to see him honored as the “Essex County Irishman of the Year”. “My father enjoyed serving the County of Essex, and he would be honored by tonight’s remembrance.”

PJ MacDonald was born on January 24, 1941, in Newark, the eldest of five children born to Willie and Marie MacDonald. He moved with his family to Belleville in 1946, where he resided until his passing and where he attended St. Peter’s Grammar School and Belleville High School. He served with the U. S. Army Military Police during the Vietnam War and many years later retired from the County of Essex where he was employed by the Essex County Sheriff’s Office and at the Essex County Jail Annex.

MacDonald was proud of his Irish heritage and was very active in Irish-American organizations. He was President of the Belleville Irish American Association and a longtime member, officer and Financial Secretary of the Newark St. Patrick’s Day Parade Committee, which dedicated its 2010 St. Patrick’s Day Parade in his honor. He was also a member of the Ironbound Irish American Association, the Cryan Association, the McGovern Association, and the Belleville Knights of Columbus No. 835. He was the Standard Bearer of the Paul J. MacDonald Association, was honored as “Essex County Irishman of the Year” in 2001, and was an honoree at the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Benefit for Project Children. He was also recognized by the Kevin G. Kennedy Association of Belleville with their “Community Service Award” in 2010.

PJ also served on the Board of Governors of the Giblin Association, was a member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians Michael L. Delahunty Division #9 of Montclair, and the Nutley Irish American Association, for which he served as the Deputy Grand Marshal of its 29<sup>th</sup> Annual St. Patrick’s Day Parade in 2007.

In 2008, he was elected to the Belleville Municipal Council to represent the Third Ward where he served the residents with commitment, compassion, good humor and integrity until his untimely passing.

PJ MacDonald is survived by his beloved wife, Janet; his daughters, Coleen MacDonald, Aileen Millar and her husband Patrick, and Sheila Lisi; his grandchildren, Allison, Gianna, Janet, Michela, John and Katelyn; great-grandson, Brandon; his brothers, Ray, Greg and John; and his sister, Joan Czekalski.

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