

# WISE IRISH WOMEN



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Women with Deep Ties to Ireland Offer Inspiration and Motivation in New Book

“*Wise Irish Women* will make you laugh, and cry, and think, and love.”

—Mary Higgins Clark  
International Bestselling Author

(Dallas, TX and El Paso, TX)—Inspired by their own Irish ancestry, two cousins compiled generations of wisdom, gleaned from women of all walks of life, with one thing in common: a deep and abiding connection to Ireland.

*Wise Irish Women: A Journey of Love, Loyalty, and Friendship to Inspire the Irish Spirit* brings together the voices of thirty-six women and their stories covering everything from Irish charm, Irish luck, and Irish love of family, to Irish gumption.

“I witnessed the strength and character of the Irish from an early age,” says Patricia Connorton Kagerer, who co-authored the book with her cousin Laura Prendergast Gordon. The Vice President of Safety and Process Management at CF Jordan Construction in Dallas, Texas, Kagerer attributes her success in a male-dominated industry to the wisdom she learned from her Irish mother and grandmother.

Co-author Gordon, who is a Deputy City Attorney for the City of El Paso, couldn’t agree more: “Our grandmother was a huge source of strength and inspiration for both of us. Patricia and I knew this particular brand of wisdom needed to be shared, along with words of wisdom from other women with deep ties to Ireland.”

Whether it’s a story by acclaimed author Mary Higgins Clark, playwright Marianne McDonald, QVC Host Jane Treacy, or the authors themselves, each story is designed to inspire women to make a difference in their own corner of the world.

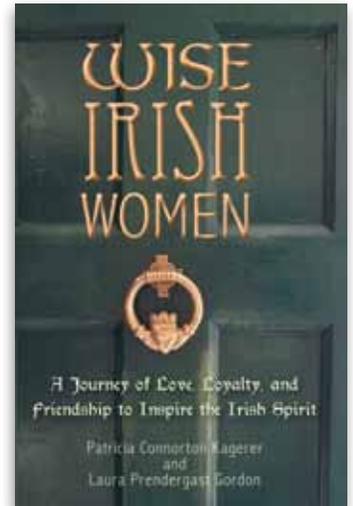
### About the Author

Patricia Connorton Kagerer attributes her success to her strong Irish Catholic upbringing and what she learned from her two role models: her mother, Pat Connorton, and her grandmother, Peggy Prendergast. Patricia lives in Plano with her husband and two children.

Laura Prendergast Gordon is presently serving as one of two deputy city attorneys for the City of El Paso. A fifth generation El Pasoan on her mother’s side, she has always cherished the strong influence of her Irish father’s family. Laura lives in El Paso with her husband and two children.

### About The Small Press

*Wise Irish Women* was published by The Small Press, a division of Brown Books Publishing Group, a Texas-based independent publisher. For more information about the publisher, please go to [www.BrownBooks.com](http://www.BrownBooks.com). For information about the authors and the women featured in the book, please go to [www.WiseIrishWomen.com](http://www.WiseIrishWomen.com).



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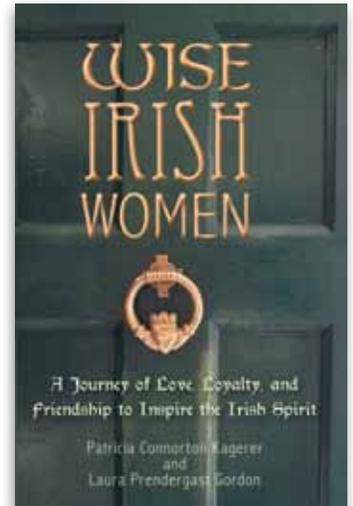
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## Q & A with

Patricia Connorton Kagerer  
and  
Laura Prendergast Gordon



### What was the catalyst that got the ball rolling on the book?

Patricia and I are cousins who grew up in El Paso, Texas, as part of a very close knit family that enjoyed being together. We regularly scheduled family dinners and always made it a priority to spend holidays and birthdays together. Patricia and I lost our beloved mother and father, who were siblings, within six months of each other during the last half of 2007. We were both heartbroken and struggling to come to terms with our grief. Over Spring Break '09, while enjoying family time together on vacation in Colorado, we started to reminisce about the wonderful relationships we'd enjoyed with our parents and how much we missed them. One story led to another and the idea for the book was born.

### What inspired you to begin compiling the actual stories in *Wise Irish Women*?

We are both women of Irish descent who witnessed the strength and character of two Irish women, Patricia's mother and our grandmother, while growing up. Both women were a powerful source of inspiration and pride and created a legacy of wisdom that we cherish and value. We knew that the wisdom of these two women should be shared but we recognized that their strength of character was not unique. Upon reflection, the idea to collect and share the words of wisdom from other women with a connection to Ireland was born.

Once we started the project, the book seemed to write itself. One of the most remarkable aspects of this project has been the opportunity to meet and interview these truly incredible women. The journey we have traveled is a story worth telling, in and of itself. We found ourselves meeting and talking with "wise Irish women" in the most serendipitous of ways. Postings on LinkedIN and HARO (Help a Reporter Out) and emails opened the door to connections all around the world. Each woman provided a connection to another and all were warm, welcoming and willing to help. Connecting with them was easy, all of them were quick to give of their time and graciously answer our questions. Meeting them has been a gift to both of us.

We also recognized that each woman has her own definition of a successful and happy life and, most important, that there are many, many extraordinary women who have wonderful stories to tell. We are hopeful that the positive and inspiring stories in the book will provide encouragement, comfort or—at the



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very least—prove to be uplifting. We recognized that a lot of the strengths that we have admired are rooted in the heritage that these women all share: a set of Irish roots.

## How would you describe Irish wisdom? What makes it so unique?

As we began this project, we were amazed that approximately 80 million people worldwide claim to be of Irish descent and that approximately 41 million Americans claim “Irish” as their primary ethnicity. We believe that because the Irish have emigrated for survival, Irish roots have touched every culture and made an impact all over the world. It’s that toughness, that resiliency that is at the heart of Irish wisdom. We saw that same kind of resiliency and tenacity coming through in the women’s stories.

## Are there any broad themes to the stories?

The Irish are known for their strength of character, sense of honor and love of family. *Wise Irish Women* is a collection of 36 stories from real women with a connection to Ireland. These stories are a wonderful example of how the Irish embrace opportunity and tackle adversity—always striving for happiness and contentment. Like the women, each story is different and unique in its own way. And each is shared with complete candor and honesty. All of the women are interesting, accomplished, and extremely talented and each has kindly agreed to share their own words of wisdom.

Many of the women have suffered from the tragic effects of alcoholism which is always devastating. Others have suffered disappointments and tragedies which may be painful to read about. Ultimately, all the women were honest and generous in sharing personal details that provide comfort and wisdom to others. There are also a few stories that discuss conflicts with the Catholic Church, religious expectations, and the balancing act between faith and reality. Others are about finding love again...in the most unlikely of places!

## How much did your professional backgrounds help you as writers?

Patricia: Professionally, I have written a great many business documents and newsletters. Two years ago, I started writing the *Dallas Women in the Workplace Examiner* blog. I also have a column on Risk Management in *CLM Magazine* that is published quarterly. I am currently serving as Vice President of Risk, Safety and Process Improvement for one of the country’s most elite construction companies, CF Jordan Construction LLC, and as such wrote a book called *Defend Your Profits: Quality Tools for Bottom Line Improvement* for the construction risk management industry.

Laura: Other than work-related projects, I have not done any formal writing. But as one of two Deputy City Attorneys for the City of El Paso, I serve as a legal advisor to the city serving directly under the City Attorney and do a great deal of writing.



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## **Patricia, this one is for you . . . did your years living abroad serve as any kind of a spark for the writing of the book?**

I have been writing for more than 20 years now and I actually started writing during my time in Munich, Germany. I put together a newsletter all about my experiences while living abroad. I think, more than anything, it made me miss home and by extension my Irish roots.

## **Laura, this one is for you . . . as a fifth generation El Pasoan why focus on your Irish roots?**

I have always been interested in my family history which embraces Mexican-French ancestors on my mother's side and my Irish relatives on my father's side. We are very family-oriented people and have always enjoyed spending time with our relatives. While growing up, I was aware of a strong family connection to Ireland. I even had an imaginary friend, Larry the Leprechaun, that I was able to convince several of my friends was real.

As a child, I was on a family vacation in Europe when my grandfather passed away while he was visiting Ireland. We were on our way for a family reunion when we got the terrible news. We arrived instead to share the funeral rites with our relatives. I will never forget the sadness we felt but, most important, I will never forget the tremendous outpouring of love and support from all over the community. The entire town turned out to pay their respects and people from all over dropped everything to help us deal with our grief. We were the beloved American relatives who were embraced with Irish love. I will never forget the experience.

## **What's next for the Wise Irish Women?**

We hope that *Wise Irish Women* is only the beginning of a journey which will allow us to meet more women who have overcome trials, tragedies and challenges in life and emerged as better, "wiser" women. We feel there is so much to benefit from by sharing with others that we intend to explore the possibility of expanding our focus. We know there are other wise women who share different connections with stories worth telling. In fact, we have already met enough additional "Wise Irish Women" for a second book.

During these challenging economic times, it is refreshing to hear positive stories from real women who, in spite of the odds and despite the naysayers, keep on going and create successful lives defined on their own terms.

We also plan to make appearances on the speaker circuit to promote *Wise Irish Women* and share the positive lessons we have learned.



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## What people are saying about *Wise Irish Women*:

“I am so pleased to be included in this wonderful collection of true stories. *Wise Irish Women* will make you laugh, and cry, and think, and love.”

—**Mary Higgins Clark**

International Bestselling Mystery Writer

“What a wonderful book, again illustrating that the Irish have it all, both the tragedy that shaped their thoughts and the joy and wit to see the rainbow after every rainfall. This book is the most precious pot of gold you could ever find!”

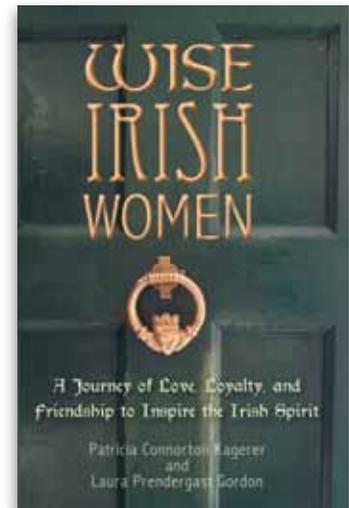
—**Marianne McDonald,**

PhD, MRIA, (Member Royal Irish Academy)

“*Wise Irish Women* embraces the essence of the Fearless Women Books, illuminating women who shine in their lives and make a difference in spite of their challenges and fears.”

—**Mary Ann Halpin**

Internationally Acclaimed Author and Photographer  
of the Fearless Women Books



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## The Wise Irish Women

**The Foreword:** Laney DeJesus

**On Irish Love of Family:**

Patricia “Pat” Prendergast Connorton  
Margaret “Peggy” Dalton Prendergast  
Jane Treacy  
Judy Daly

**On Irish Roots:**

Mary McAuliffe  
Janet Stephenson  
Karen Rankin  
Nannette Rundle Carroll

**On Irish Passion:**

Mary Higgins Clark  
Elaine Ní Bhraonáin  
Corinne Dillon

**On Irish Gumption:**

Lulu O’Sullivan  
Rachel Gaffney  
Mary Gosling  
Sally Miller

**On Irish Luck:**

Naomi McMahon  
Patricia Parks DeNucci  
Audrey O’Gorman  
Renee Gatz  
Joanna Wilson Vargas

**On Irish Perseverance:**

Eileen Lynch  
Diane Stopford  
Anne Martin  
Susan McBride Rothman

**On Irish Charm:**

Kathleen Onical  
Barbara Campbell  
Melanie Fitzpatrick  
Imelda McGratten

**On Irish Artistry:**

Regina Lowrey Adducci  
Rachel Arbuckle  
Ann Montieth

**On Irish Generosity:**

Jane Frances Rundle  
Diane O’Connor  
Lorraine Suankum, Caliegh and Delia Fabro  
(The Celtic Keiki)  
Marianne McDonald  
Sister Mary Anne Owens

**The Afterword:**

Marcia Wieder



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## About the Authors

### Patricia “Tricia” Connorton Kagerer

Serving as vice president of risk, safety, and process improvement for one of the country’s most elite construction companies, Tricia learned what it meant to be the only woman in the boardroom—and how to exceed expectations in a tough, male-dominated world. An expert in risk management, process improvement, conflict resolution, and business culture, Tricia climbed to the top of the corporate ladder and transformed the culture of the organization.

Tricia attributes her success to her strong Irish Catholic upbringing and what she learned from her two role models: her mother, Pat Connorton, and her grandmother, Peggy Prendergast. Both women dedicated their lives to hard work, tenacity, and faith, serving to accomplish one goal—to give their children a better start in life.

Tricia was born in the Bronx, New York, and was raised in El Paso, Texas. She has visited Ireland several times, where she spent time on the family farm, Clanevan, in County Wexford, Ireland.

After suddenly losing her mom in 2007, Tricia decided to channel her grief into her book, *Wise Irish Women*. Tricia is an author, keynote speaker, and recipient of numerous awards, including the *Dallas Business Journal*’s “Women to Watch” and the *Business Insurance Magazine*’s “Top 25 Women to Watch.”

Tricia has a master’s degree in education and human development: conflict resolution from Southern Methodist University. She holds a business and public relations degree from Regis University in Denver, Colorado. Tricia is married to Markus and they have two children: Tommy and Anneliese. They currently reside in Plano, Texas.

### Laura Prendergast Gordon

Laura Prendergast Gordon is presently serving as one of two deputy city attorneys for the City of El Paso. Born and raised in El Paso, Texas, she graduated from Bryn Mawr College in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, and then received her JD degree from Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas. After graduating from law school, she returned to El Paso and has spent the bulk of her career as a public servant working for the City of El Paso in the office of the city attorney.



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A fifth generation El Pasoan on her mother's side, she has always cherished the strong influence of her Irish father's family. Growing up in a close-knit family that enjoyed just being together made her value the gift of time spent with loved ones. Many of her most treasured memories involved sitting around the table at her grandmother's house enjoying a strong pot of tea and hearing family stories.

After losing her father to a sudden illness in May 2007, she began to reexamine her Irish roots and felt a desire to explore the strong values and wisdom of her Irish family connection. The Wise Irish Women project was a way of paying tribute to the women in her life who inspired her to strive for success and happiness.

Laura is married to Patrick R. Gordon and has two children, a son, Patrick Thomas, and a daughter, Aidan.



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