

Children's book features Fighting Irish mascot Clashmore Mike

Colleagues publish children's book

BY GENE STOWE, FOR NDWORKS

Clashmore Mike, the Fighting Irish's Irish terrier mascot, was long gone before **Susan Mullen Guibert** and **Brendan O'Shaughnessy** arrived on campus. But the writers have brought him back.

Guibert and O'Shaughnessy, who both graduated from Notre Dame and now work in the Division of Public Affairs and Communications, collaborated on "Clashmore Mike Comes Home," a children's book published this year by Corby Books.

O'Shaughnessy, who graduated in 1993 in English and public policy, returned two years ago as executive communications writer. Guibert, who earned a bachelor's degree in American studies in 1987 and a master in communication arts in 1993, returned eight years ago to public relations, where she's an assistant director.

Their offices are next door to each other in Grace Hall. The idea for their book arose when she was telling him about her as-yet unpublished children's book. He had discovered Clashmore Mike while doing research for a speech by President Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C., on why Notre Dame is called the Fighting Irish.

"Before the Leprechaun, the mascot was Clashmore Mike, from 1924 to 1965," O'Shaughnessy says, adding that the first one, named for the village of Clashmore in Ireland, was a gift to Coach Knute Rockne.

"There were a series of Irish terriers that served as the mascot," probably a dozen, although the exact count is lost along with the history of why the canine was phased out for the leprechaun.

It was a story begging to be told. "I was in the bookstore one day looking at Notre Dame children's books," Guibert says. "I realized there is an incredible market there. I remembered my kids loved stories with animals in them particularly if they had a voice."

"It seemed like the perfect formula for a children's book: Notre Dame, kids, dogs."

Not just any dog, but a mascot whose lore includes living in the stadium basement with his handler, eating goat meat for a week before meeting the Navy mascot, and learning leg-lifting tricks not recorded in the children's book.

"He had the best record of any mascot in college football – six national championships," O'Shaughnessy says, although the Leprechaun's luck in his first year, the 1966 championship, apparently sealed his role.

"Clashmore Mike Comes Home" opens with a modern family who brings their terrier, Mikey, to a Notre Dame tailgate.

The dog gets lost chasing squirrels across campus and, at the moment he noticed the real-life bas-relief of Clashmore Mike on Alumni Hall, Father Flynn, a kindly priest on a nearby bench, offers to tell him the story.

The present-day pages are rich with colorful illustrations by Andrea Pynaert of Mishawaka, who used the authors' family, friends and coworkers for many of the characters.

When Father Flynn recounts the past, the pages fade to old-timey black and white, recovering their color when Mikey joins the passing band—led by the Leprechaun—and reunites with his family.

The authors, who hadn't heard of Clashmore Mike when they were students on campus (although their publisher, Jim Langford, remembers him), hope the book restores the mascot to memory in the rich Notre Dame tradition.

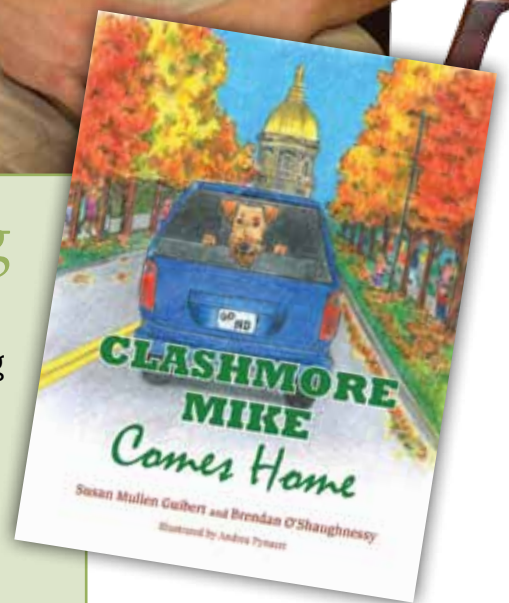
"A lot of the old-timers liked Clashmore Mike," she says. "We've been surprised how few people know about him."



CAROL C. BRADLEY

Book Signing

Guibert and O'Shaughnessy will do a special book signing for faculty and staff from noon to 1 p.m. Friday, July 15, at Reckers. The book (\$20) will be available for purchase.



Susan Guibert and Brendan O'Shaughnessy

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