

FAIRFIELD, CT, September 26, 2013 **/24-7PressRelease/** -- Kicking up five decades of memories of playing rugby at Fairfield University, more than 500 former "Red Ruggers" are expected to return to the campus of Fairfield University the weekend of Friday, October 4 through Sunday, October 6, to celebrate the "50th Anniversary Celebration of Fairfield University Rugby." The Irish actor, writer, and politician Malachy McCourt, a noted rugby referee who officiated a number of Fairfield's early games, will be a special guest on Saturday, October 5.

An Irish immigrant, Mr. McCourt was also a highly regarded rugby referee in the early '60s. He refereed a number of Fairfield's first games and contributed to the early growth of the club by introducing all of the aspects of the game to the Fairfield players, including its laws, the way it should be played, and how the players should act during and after the game.

Here are the details of the Saturday, October 5, festivities which are open to the public and will take place rain or shine at Lt. Hans Grauert Memorial Field, on Fairfield's campus:

- 10 a.m. Alumni Game/Men, there will be two separate games - one for recent graduates and one for "older gentlemen," 35 and up.
- 11 a.m. Alumnae Game/Women Ruggers play a seven-a-side or ten-a-side match.
- 11:30 a.m. 50th Anniversary Ceremony: 50th Anniversary celebration in a ceremony with special guests and tributes.

- Noon-1:30 p.m. Barbecue: group photos.
- 12:30 p.m. FURFC Men's "A" Match V. Marist
- 2:30 p.m. FURFC Women's "A" Match V. Hofstra

The weekend is designed to festively commemorate Fairfield University's oldest club sport, with Men's and Women's Alumni games, current Red Ruggers Men's and Women's Club matches, special ceremonies at Lt. Hans Grauert Memorial Field, a barbecue, gala events on Bellarmine Lawn, and Sunday morning Mass at Egan Chapel of St. Ignatius Loyola, on the schedule. The public is invited to Saturday's morning and afternoon games and ceremonies, and VIP invited guests also includes Governor Dannel P. Malloy.

The "50th Anniversary Celebration of Fairfield University Rugby" volunteer committee of over 100 leaders, "decade whips" and class captains is co-chaired by Dr. Kurt Schlichting '70 and Bill Connolly Jr. '69. "We're expecting an extremely large, enthusiastic turnout," said Bill Connolly Jr. '69, co-chair of the event. "It should be a great day and evening."

In his blog post "The Gimp Remembers: Fairfield Rugby 1963," Robert "Gimp" Sullivan remembers that Fairfield opponents that very first year included rugby clubs of Fordham, the Columbia "Old Blues", Harvard, Brown, Wesleyan, the New York Rugby Club, and - quite possibly - MIT. In all, the Fairfield ruggers achieved a 5-1 record its debut season. "Gentlemanly

conduct, aside from attempting to wreak bodily havoc on the opponent, was mandatory," he writes, adding: "The ubiquitous adage of 'work hard; play hard' was no better professed than in the rugby milieu, an inveterate contract among the clubs to foster a spirit of aggressive competition salved by after-the-match gatherings among the players, friends, female compatriots, and accompanied by copious amounts of adult beverages supplied by the host club."

Sullivan, of those gatherings, recounts: "A swaggering revelry of songs permeated the surroundings, commonly of Irish flavor. These were first introduced to our club by Malachy McCourt, of literary and thespian fame, the referee at our opening game with Fordham and the provider of the cultural genesis." He adds, "Regardless of the degree to which these pioneering ruggers encountered situations you'd prefer not relating to mother or sister, there was never a point where reckless abandon or wanton behavior reared its ugly head."

The public is welcome on Saturday, Oct. 5, 2013, to participate in the "50th Anniversary Celebration of Fairfield University Rugby"; registration is required for the gala. To register, visit <http://www.fairfield.edu/rugby50thregistration>. For more information, visit: <http://www.friendsoffairfieldrugby.org>

Fairfield University is a Jesuit University, rooted in one of the world's oldest intellectual and spiritual traditions. More than 5,000 undergraduate and graduate students from 36 states, 47 foreign countries, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico are enrolled in the University's five schools. In the spirit of rigorous and sympathetic inquiry into all dimensions of human experience, Fairfield welcomes students from diverse backgrounds to share ideas and engage in open conversations. The University is located in the heart of a region where the future takes shape, on a stunning campus on the Connecticut coast just an hour from New York City.