

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515-3207

November 24, 2009

Celtic Park Apartments  
Board of Directors  
c/o Celtic Park Management Office  
48-10 43<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Woodside, NY 11377

Dear Distinguished Members of the Board:

I am writing to express my support for efforts to recognize the tremendous athletic and historical contributions of the Irish-American Athletic Club (IAAC) by erecting a plaque featuring the IAAC's "Winged Fist" emblem in Celtic Park. As you may know, during the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the site that now houses the Celtic Park Apartments was once the heart of recreation and sports for the area's burgeoning Irish population.

Celtic Park was long affiliated with the great line of Irish-American athletes and Olympians who emerged from the IAAC. It should be noted that at the time, many Irish-American athletes were excluded from other mainstream athletic clubs, including the New York Athletic Club, due to overwhelming prejudice. The IAAC provided these individuals, many of whom were law enforcement officials or blue collar workers by day, with an outlet of their own. While predominantly Irish-American, the Club was not exclusive to the Irish and boasted members from other ethnic groups and nationalities. In fact the first African-American to win an Olympic gold medal, John Baxter Taylor, Jr., was a member of the IAAC. The "Winged Fist" emblem was adopted by the Club as a symbol of strength, perseverance and triumph.

Therefore, when I first learned that there was a movement afoot to have the contributions of the IAAC recognized with a plaque featuring this emblem, I was eager to become involved. It is my understanding that the Board was initially very receptive to the idea of having a historical plaque erected but withdrew this support over concern about the "Winged Fist" emblem being offensive. According to Ian McGowan who has spearheaded this project, the Board has not explained its rationale for rejecting the emblem or concluding that the image is offensive or controversial.

Intended to be a unifying rather than divisive feature, the emblem speaks to an important part of our city's history and a plaque commemorating the IAAC without the emblem would be incomplete. I therefore respectfully request that the Board reconsider its

**WASHINGTON OFFICE:**

2404 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-3965

**BRONX OFFICE:**

2800 BRUCKNER BOULEVARD, SUITE 301  
BRONX, NY 10465  
(718) 931-1400

**QUEENS OFFICE:**

74-09 37TH AVENUE, SUITE 306B  
JACKSON HEIGHTS, NY 11372  
(718) 779-1400

**CO-OP CITY OFFICE:**

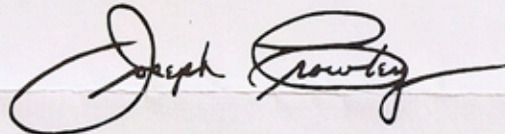
177 DREISER LOOP, ROOM 3  
BRONX, NY 10475  
(718) 320-2314

current stance and that all interested stakeholders come together to clarify any discrepancies. I am confident that with cooperation and a healthy dialogue, the Board's concerns can be addressed. I look forward to a favorable disposition in this matter so that the historical plaque can be erected as planned with the "Winged Fist" emblem intact.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this matter further do not hesitate to contact Ms. Annette Juriaco, my Deputy District Director, at 718-931-1400 or via email at [annette.juriaco@mail.house.gov](mailto:annette.juriaco@mail.house.gov).

Thank you in advance for your courtesy and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph Crowley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Joseph Crowley  
Member of Congress

JC;aj