

# COMING THROUGH

## — BUDWEISER'S IRISH BENEFACTOR

■ *By Niall O'Dowd*

**T**his one's for you Irish America. Dennis Long, President of Anheuser Busch, largest brewing company in the world with sales of over \$6 billion last year, is as proud of his Irish roots as he is of his success with the King of Beers.

This is not a rich-Yank-discovers-his-Irish-roots-story, however. Fifty year-old Dennis Long has already done far more than the obligatory ramble through the bramble in search of ancient links.

Soon he will announce that Budweiser, in conjunction with Guinness, will be marketed in Ireland, providing valuable employment. It is a major step in the giant brewery's plans to become involved there.

In addition, Anheuser Busch recently announced \$3 million in sponsorship for the Irish Derby, one of the great European horse races, held every year on the rolling plains of the Curragh, in County Kildare. In conjunction with that event, Budweiser will launch a major Irish sweepstakes promotion in the United States. Among the prizes will be trips to Ireland for the race.

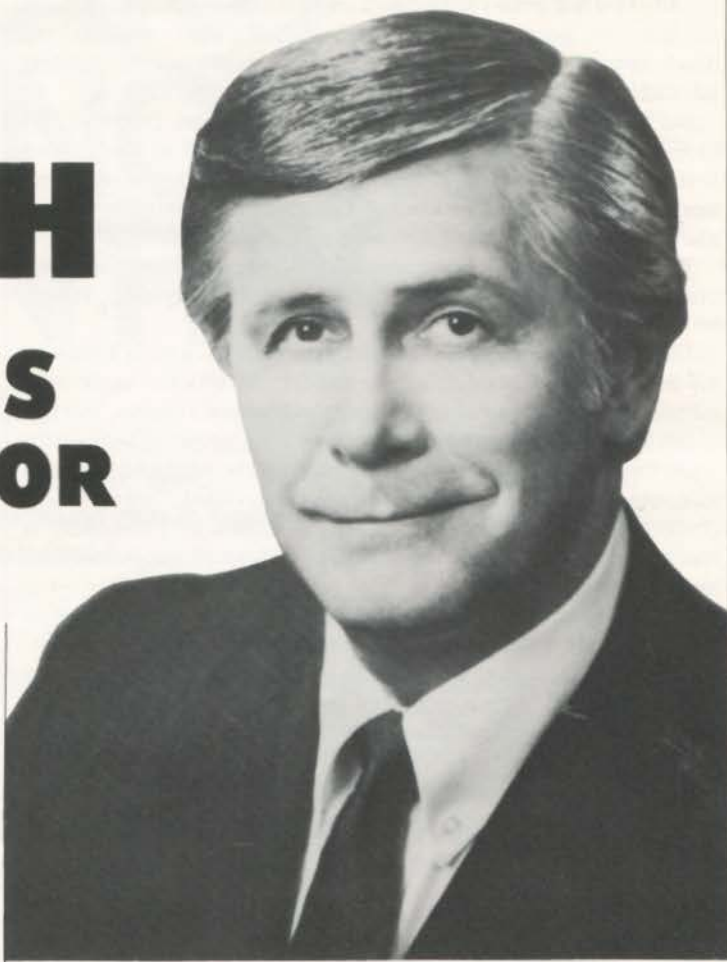
On the home front, Budweiser launched their own film, "The Irish Americans," early in 1985, outlining the Irish contribution to the U.S. And a film on Irish music, featuring James Galway and the Chieftains, is being backed to the tune of \$250,000.

Budweiser will also sponsor the Shamrock Games, a concept they invented in 1985, bringing together the best Irish athletes from all over the world in a huge Irish-fest of games and competitions. The 1986 renewal will be held in the United States and all those of Irish heritage worldwide can take part.

Events like the sponsorship of the Derby and the Shamrock games provide the perfect combination of business, promotion and pleasure for the giant brewery which is not unmindful that there are 40.7 million Americans of Irish extraction, and that the Irish Americans represent a perfect ethnic marketing target.

Yet beyond that immediate concern there is a sentiment so profoundly Irish at the top of Anheuser Busch that one can only speculate what the potential would be if even one other comparable U.S. company showed such a commitment.

Budweiser's Irish spirit is embodied by company president Denis Long, ex choir boy at St. Colmcille's parish in St. Louis, ex band leader and amateur boxer (23 wins and 3 losses), ex soccer coach (527 wins and 8 losses) and full time Hibernophile.



Long is an effective communicator, a la Lee Iacocca. The comparison is especially apt in that under his tenure Anheuser Busch has enjoyed the kind of success Iacocca fashioned in another field with Chrysler. Though he modestly describes himself as "no mental giant," the word in the industry is that every move he makes is literally put on tap by the opposition.

One of his most fervent wishes now is that, at a time when Irish Americans are finally making it in the top echelons of business that something constructive for Ireland and Irish America can come out of it.

"Irish Americans are really only now reaching the top levels of business, law, finance and politics," he says. "We're the third generation and we've paid our dues. It's now time to put something back."

Long himself is a perfect example of the kind of rise from the ghetto to the gravy train which has marked so many Irish. His great grandparents, originally from Kerry, settled in St. Louis. His grandfather worked with Anheuser Busch, and his father, "a free spirited Irishman, quick to laugh and quick to show emotion," was the major influence in his life.

During the Great Depression Long's father lost his job and had to scramble financially. Consequently, young Dennis grew up in poor circumstances in an Irish neighborhood in St. Louis. "I know it sounds corny," says Long now of that time, "but it's true that I had a poor childhood but an incredible amount of love."

At St. Colmcille's parish school he learned about his Irish roots for the first time. He sang the songs taught to him by the old Irish



priests, and the history and imagery of Ireland was a constant companion.

In his teens Long became a band leader, and his orchestra was a fixture at weddings and other functions. During this period he was already married with young children, working five days a week at the brewery, going to school three nights a week, and making much needed money from his orchestra engagements. Understandably, his Irish pursuits faded into the background.

But they were soon rekindled in his early thirties. During a trip to Europe he became aware of the old world and of what being Irish meant, not just in the American context, but also in the world. "I believe that the kind of knowledge I eventually gained about my roots can only come with maturity," he says now.

Years later, in 1983, Long again visited Ireland, and it was then that the echoes of his childhood became a gentle symphony. He felt he had come home.

"Apart from the brogues, I could have been back in St. Louis, in my Irish neighborhood," he remembers. "It was the same easy manner, the same way of life — irritatingly slow at times, but full of fun and great to be around."

On his return, Long resolved to "turn up the pace and see what we could do for Ireland." Since then, as demanded, that pace has quickened, but Long is not completely satisfied. "I feel there is much more to contribute," he says. "There's something more that we can help achieve."

He feels that as a first step the people in Ireland must realize their potential, as mirrored in their successful American cousins. "That confidence, that ability that has allowed us to achieve so much in the the U.S. can be part of the Irish psyche," he says. "It's just a matter of giving them that confidence, of helping them believe."

As evidence of what can be achieved, Long gives the example of

his own company, a small family brewery founded in 1852 and now the largest in the world. Because of the ethnic make-up of St. Louis, it quickly became a German and Irish stronghold. Nowadays, the combination of the skilled Teutonic brewmasters and the mercurial marketing and consumer conscious Irish at the top echelons is irresistible.

Long has yet to find the perfect vehicle for his Irish aspirations. Though Anheuser Busch is contributing in their own practical way, he feels more must be done to involve other leading Irish American businessmen. With 35 per cent of the Fortune 500 Chief Executives being of Irish background the harvest is potentially great.

"We need an economic Irish coalition that can contribute to Ireland in a manner in which that country has contributed its people to the United States," says Long, who as Chairman of the Board for the U.S.O. has seen first hand what a determined organization can accomplish, "but as of yet, I have not identified such a group."

In the meantime, Long will continue with his own wholehearted support. In fact, because of that support, he was mentioned in newspaper reports as a possible U.S. Ambassador to Ireland when that post became vacant recently, and he states that someday, he might indeed be interested. He would certainly make a fine emissary.

But for him it all comes back to his Irish roots. During his last visit to Ireland, as he stood in the bare, ruined halls of Long Castle in County Kerry, probable sight of his ancestral home, he realized that this need to care and contribute would always be one of the things uppermost in his mind.

"I could feel the past reach out and touch me when I was there," he said, "and that's what's really important — the Irish experience, mine or anyone else's, and what it can mean to all of us."

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## Allied Irish Bank — At Home In The U.S.

**Almost three years ago, one of Ireland's largest banking chains, the Allied Irish Bank, undertook major expansion in the United States. COLM RAPPLÉ, Financial Editor of the *Evening Press* newspaper in Ireland, reports on the progress of that move.**

Last November Allied Irish Banks, one of Ireland's two major banking groups, reported a pre-tax profit of \$52 million for the six months to end September. That was a relatively modest 9 per cent improvement on the similar period last year, but it represented a major achievement for the bank. Only months before the government had to step in to save one of the bank's subsidiaries — the Insurance Corporation of Ireland (ICI) — from collapse. The future seemed bleak, but the bank had other irons in the fire.

Indeed, its ability to continue reporting increased profits, after that traumatic experience, owes much to another major diversification — an investment which has been as successful as the other was not. That is its major share in a large U.S. bank.

In fact, the bank's investment in First Maryland Bankcorp — that state's second largest bank — has been yielding a growing return to Allied Irish. In the six months to September it contributed just over \$10 million to the AIB profits. That was up a sharp 38 per cent on the similar period last year, and was the largest single factor in the bank's profit growth.

Within two years, AIB will hold a 51 per cent controlling interest in First Maryland and Chief Executive Gerry Scanlon foresees a bright future. "The coming deregulation of banking is going to allow banks to spread their wings right across the States. First Maryland might merge with another bank to take advantage of the opportunities," he says "or it might go it alone." Scanlon admits that there might also be a bid to buy

them out, but AIB is not looking for buyers. It is happy with its investment and wants to stick with it.

Allied Irish Bank is no newcomer to the U.S.A. It opened its first branches in New York and Chicago in 1973. In 1978 it opened a full service branch on Park Avenue in New York, followed by a full branch office in Chicago. The major investment in First Maryland came in March 1983. The announcement was made just before St. Patrick's Day — although that was hardly arranged.

Under the terms of the deal, Allied Irish acquired a 43 per cent stake in the Maryland bank with agreement on further purchases over the following four years to bring its final stake to between 50 and 60 per

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