



# Mayo Society of New York

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Founded 1879; incorporated 1891 as Mayo Men's Benefit, Patriot and Social Association of the City of New York; later as Mayo Men's P & B Association and in 1985, gender neutral as the Mayo Society, Inc. of the City of New York.

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NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2022

**Regular Meeting** **Tuesday, November 08, 2022**

**Where:** **St. Sebastian Parish Center**  
**39-60 57th Street**  
**Woodside, NY 11377**

**Time:** **7:30 P.M. Sharp**

**Regular meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month. There are no meetings July & August.**

## Our President's Note

Dear Members and Friends,

I hope this letter finds you well with the holiday season fast approaching.

On August 21, we held a beautiful mass followed by a lovely reception in celebration of the feast of our Lady of Knock Shrine in East Durham. It was a great turnout with over 90 people joining the festivities. A special thanks to Betty McLoughlin, Noreen O'Donoghue, Mary Coyne-Byrne and Rita Lydon, for running the event and making it such a success. I also want to thank those that travelled by bus and to the parishioners of Our Lady of Knock Shrine and the Shamrock House for being so hospitable with the spread of food and drinks upon our arrival. With the help of God, we hope to see everybody again next year.

On Sunday November 20, 2022, we will be hosting our Communion Breakfast being held at Connolly's Corner at 10:00 am. This is a time to remember the souls of deceased members of our society and their families. We hope you can attend and support one another. A traditional Irish breakfast will be served following the Mass. Please contact Rita at (516)-455-3878 if you plan on joining us. As it's a year of new beginnings for the Society, we announce the winners of the Mayo Society Scholarship and present the awards during the breakfast:

### High School

First Place: Jack Veas  
Second place: Seamus Mc Entee

### College

First place: Marina McEntee  
Second place: Erin Keaveny

Our December meeting will be held at Donovan's at 7:30 pm. This is an open meeting where refreshments will be served as we come together to celebrate the Christmas season.

We are preparing to start the yearly Mayo Society Diner dance to be held in Antun's Queens Village on March 11, 2023. This year's honorees are **Dawn Dougherty** as Mayo Woman of the Year and **Brendan Armstrong** as Mayo Man of the Year. Music will be performed by the Celtic Cruise as we come together to celebrate our honorees and their contributions of our community.

In accordance with the society's constitution, our Board of Trustees will present a slate of officers for the 2023 election at our November meeting. Qualified candidates may also be nominated from the floor. In the event a vote is necessary, this will take place at our December meeting. Please be reminded that members can only run for office if their dues are fully paid to date, have attended a minimum of five meetings since November 2021 and in the case of directors, be a member in good standing for the past three years. Furthermore, the right to vote is only afforded to members in good standing. We look forward to your attending this important meeting.

A friendly reminder to pay your 2022 dues, dues are only \$10:00. You can mail dues to.

The Mayo Society of New York  
P. O. Box 780214  
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Attn: Mr John Gray

Congratulations to our past president; Betty McLoughlin on her recent humanitarian award.

On a personal note, a big thank you to the Mayo Society and their family members for their continued support at my nomination at the Shining Star awards held at Gargiulo's of Brooklyn.

Finally, I wish Maureen O'Dea-Philip and John Gray a speedy recovery.

Please continue to keep all our sick and deceased in your prayers

God Bless and Happy Thanksgiving.

**Mike McMahon**  
**President**

**FRANK STAGG:**

*"I want my memorial to be peace with justice."*

Proinsias (Frank) Stagg was born in Bloomfield, Hollymount, Ballinrobe, Co. Mayo on October 5, 1941. He was the seventh of thirteen children born to Mary (née Vahey) and Henry Stagg, a farmer who was a veteran of the War of Independence and the anti-treaty side in the Civil War.

Frank attended Newbrook primary school and the Christian Brothers secondary school at Ballinrobe. He was known for his skill at Gaelic Football and Handball, in which he won Mayo and Connacht Minor Championships. He also liked to sing.

He later emigrated to England where he found work as a bus conductor, then bus driver. In 1970, he married Bridie Armstrong, who came from Carnicon, Co. Mayo. He always returned home to Mayo for his holidays.

In 1972, he joined the Sinn Féin cumann in Luton, England and then soon joined the Provisional IRA. Frank was arrested in Coventry in April 1973 along with six others. He was convicted of criminal damage and conspiracy to commit arson. Frank was said to be a commanding officer. He was sentenced to 10 years.

He was first sent to Albany Prison on the Isle of Wight. There he refused to do any prison work, insisting he was a political prisoner and not a criminal; for which he was placed in solitary confinement. On March 31, 1974, after being moved to Parkhurst Prison, he joined a Hunger Strike demanding to be transferred to an Irish prison with sisters Marion and Dolours Price, Hugh Feeney, Gerry Kelly and fellow Mayoman Michael Gaughan; to whom he grew very close.

On April 10, Frank and Gaughan were transferred to the prison hospital. Two weeks later began the force-feeding. The National Hunger Strike committee describes the process: "six to eight guards would restrain the prisoner and drag him or her by the hair to the top of the bed, where they would stretch the prisoner's neck over the metal rail, force a block between his or her teeth and then pass a feeding tube, which extended down the throat, through a hole in the block."

Gaughan died after a brutal force feeding on June 3, 1974. Frank was devastated by his death. Gaughan's funeral and burial in Ballina brought a huge turnout of support. The prisoners ended their Hunger Strike after assurances they would be sent to Ireland. A month later, Frank was transferred to Long Lartin Prison in Worcestershire.

Frank again refused to do prison work and was held in solidarity confinement. Himself and his family were subjected to humiliating strip searches. In protest, he began another Hunger Strike on October 10, 1974. He ended his fast after 34 days after the prison Governor agreed to end the strip searches and promised again, he would be sent to Ireland.

In March 1975, The Price sisters, Gerry Kelly and Hugh Feeney were sent to prisons in the North of Ireland. Frank was denied. He was transferred to Wakefield prison in West Yorkshire, where he was again held in solidarity confinement for refusing to do prison work.

His mother in particular made difficult journeys to visit him in different prisons to which they kept transferring him.

On December 14, 1975, Frank began another Hunger Strike with several other prisoners. Tired of the empty promises, he wanted assurances in writing this time. His demands were:

- \*No solitary confinement
- \*No prison work
- \*Repatriation to prison in Ireland.

The authorities refused to meet his demands. Frank Stagg died on 12 February 1976, after 62 days on Hunger Strike. Shortly before his death, he wrote his final message: "We are the risen people, this time we must not be driven into the gutter even if this should mean dying for justice. The fight must go on. I want my memorial to be peace with justice."

Frank indicated his wishes to have a Republican funeral and be buried in the Republican plot at Leigue Cemetery in Ballina with his comrade Michael Gaughan. His body was to be flown to Dublin airport, but the Irish government ordered his body to Shannon airport. It was airlifted to Hollymount. They were anxious to avoid a showing of support as there had been for Gaughan's funeral.

On Saturday, February 21, a private mass was held, and the body was taken to Ballina, to be buried in the Leigue Cemetery, but not in the Republican plot. Six feet of cement was then poured over the body to prevent it being moved. The next day, members of the IRA held a military funeral for him, with a customary volley of shots. Joe Cahill, former IRA Chief of Staff vowed that Frank's body would lie next to Gaughan's.

On November 5, 1977, his brother George Stagg and a few volunteers dug into the adjacent grave and tunneled under the concrete to retrieve Frank's remains. Proinsias Stagg is now buried as he had wished, next to his comrade Michael Gaughan; in the plot reserved for the Republican heroes of County Mayo.

**Kevin Rooney**