



# 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.

**VOL.174**

**NEWSLETTER**

**SEPT 2023**

**Regular Meeting** Tuesday, Sept 12, 2023  
**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

I hope everyone had a great summer with family and friends, enjoyed their travels and ready now for the Fall.

We are to host our next meeting on Tuesday September 12, 2023. I hope to see many tanned smiling faces there.

I am thankful to all those who joined our Lady of Knock trip in East Durham this past August. The mass was held at the Our Lady of Knock shrine with an enjoyable luncheon hosted at the Shamrock. I would like to especially thank Betty McLoughlin and Noreen O'Donoghue for the hard work they put in to make such a great trip.

Please continue to remember our members who we lost over the summer. May they all Rest in Peace.

Looking forward to seeing everyone at the next meeting

All the Best Always

**Mike McMahon**  
**President**

## Upcoming Events and News

- The 42nd Annual Great Irish Fair of New York will be held on Sat, Sep 16, 2023, at 10:00 am. Holy Name of Jesus Roman Catholic Church - Brooklyn, New York, York, United States  
<https://allevents.in/york/the-42nd-annual-great-irish-fair-of-new-york/200024641245505>
- The White Plains Irish Festival will be held on Sun, Sep 17 2023 from 3-7pm at the Archbishop Stepinac High School 950 Mamaroneck Ave, White Plains, NY  
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/white-plains-irish-festival-tickets-655195105197>
- NJ Irish Festival will be held on Sat, Sep 09 2023 from 3-7pm at the Raritan Bay Waterfront Park 201 John T O'Leary Blvd, South Amboy, NJ  
<https://www.jerseyfamilyfun.com/event/irish-festival-in-south-amboy/>
- Annual Queens Irish Heritage Festival will be held on Sat, Sep 23, 2023 from 3-7 at the Hunter's Point South Park Center Blvd, Long Island City, NY  
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/annual-queens-irish-heritage-festival-tickets-706182349417>
- Union County Celtic Festival will be held on Sat, Sept 09, 2023, from 10-9pm at the Oak Ridge Park 136 Oak Ridge Rd, Clark, NJ  
<https://mommypoppins.com/new-jersey-kids/event/events/union-county-celtic-festival>

## THE IRISH ROOTS OF JACKIE GLEASON

John Herbert “Jackie” Gleason was born in Brooklyn, New York on 26 February 1916. His mother, Mae Agnes (née Kelly) came from Farranree, Co. Cork. His father Herbert’s father was an Irish immigrant. He grew up at 328 Chauncey Street in Brooklyn, an address later made famous by his Ralph Kramden character.

His mother was very overbearing, raised him strictly catholic and never wanted him out of her sight. He once said the other kids would make fun of his Irish accent. His father, an alcoholic insurance auditor; abandoned the family in December 1925 when Jackie was nine, forcing his mother to work as a subway attendant.

After his father left, Jackie then began hustling pool. He became interested in performing after participating in a school play. He put together a comedy act with his friends and got jobs as a master of ceremonies in local theaters. His mother died of sepsis in 1935, when he was nineteen. Jackie then became a professional comedian, working small clubs steadily.

Gleason appeared in several films beginning with “Navy Blues” in 1941, while still doing standup. He appeared in several shows on the Broadway stage. His big break would come in 1949 in the new medium known as television. He played the lead role in. “The Life of Riley”, originally a radio comedy program. The show ran only a few months. Gleason was then hired to host the DuMont Television Network “Cavalcade of Stars”.

Gleason was so successful with “The Cavalcade of Stars” that he was contracted by the CBS television network in 1952 to move the show there and it was renamed “The Jackie Gleason Show”. It presented a variety of entertainment. Many of the comedy sketch characters were based on people he knew or observed growing up in Brooklyn.

In 1955, he made a separate series of a popular recurring sketch on his show about a Brooklyn bus driver and his wife and friends known as “The Honeymooners”.

The show was centered around Ralph Kramden; an everyman who works hard and dreams of “getting rich quick” to provide for his long-suffering wife Alice. She is quite sensible and often brings him back to reality, for

which he idly threatens to send her “...to the moon “before he realizes “Baby, you’re the greatest!”. In these schemes, he often involves his dizzy neighbor Ed Norton; played by fellow Irish American Art Carney. Norton is married to the kind and patient Trixie.

“The Honeymooners” show and its characters are among the most iconic and beloved in the history of television. That year thirty-nine classic episodes of the show were recorded. Years later, Gleason released them in syndication, and they are still widely shown today. Although the story lines in “The Honeymooners” drew a lot from Gleason’s experiences and observations in his Irish neighborhood, the characters on the show are not “ethnic” characters. Earlier shows with identifiably ethnic main characters, were on the decline. They were seen to have limited audiences.

The Jackie Gleason Show ended in 1957. In 1959, Gleason returned to Broadway in “Take Me Along”, a musical based on “Ah, Wilderness” by Irish American playwright Eugene O’Neill. The role won him a Tony award. In 1961, Gleason appeared in a dramatic role as professional pool player Minnesota Fats in the movie “The Hustler”. In 1962, Gleason starred in the film “Gigot”, a screenplay he wrote himself about a mute, simple Parisian janitor. The movie, of which he was very proud; was directed by fellow Irish American Gene Kelly.

He revived The Jackie Gleason show in 1962 with a new catch phrase “How sweet it is!”, which became his trademark. It reflected his reputation as a bon vivant. He was known as a man with huge appetites, for food, drink, and women. He was also a heavy smoker and a legendary spendthrift.

Gleason’s next iconic role was in 1977’s “Smokey And The Bandit”, starring Burt Reynolds. He played Sheriff Buford T. Justice of Texas who takes the law quite personally. His efforts are endlessly frustrated by the Bandit’s craftiness and wide popular support and his own dimwitted son, “Junior”. Director Hal Needham encouraged him to improvise, which results in him stealing all his scenes. He also starred in the movie’s two sequels.

Gleason, dubbed “The Great One” by Orson Welles died 24 June 1987 at his home in Florida.

**Kevin Rooney**