



# 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

Feb 2019

**Regular Meeting** Tuesday, February 12, 2019

**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 do hope you are all well and keeping nice and warm and that the snow and ice will stay away.

It's been a sad week for our society, we lost another great member and friend to all of us, John Jennings. He was a great man and would have been celebrating his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday in a few weeks. To the Jennings family, we are sharing in your loss. In lieu of flowers for John, the family requests donations in the Memory of John to the Mayo Society.

Our dear friend Theresa Cunningham is home and her health continues to improve. She has a big birthday coming up next month, God Bless her. Join me in sending Get Well wishes to, our good friend Tilda McHale, and we hope that you are feeling better.

The annual Mayo Society St. Patrick's Day dance is fast approaching; **Lynn McGoldrick** will be honored as the Mayo Woman of the Year and **Tom Henry** as the Mayo Man of the Year. This event will take place at Antun's, 96-43 Springfield Blvd, Queens Village, NY. Cocktails are at 7.00pm followed by dinner and dancing at 8.00pm. Tommy Flynn Band will provide the music for this evening's celebrations. **Tickets are \$90 per person or a table of ten for \$900.** For reservations, please contact Rita Lydon Lenz: 516-221-4834 or Noreen Lydon O'Donoghue: 914-643-1014. **The deadline for journal ads is February 28, 2019.** For additional information please contact the Journal Chairs: Mary P. Coyne-Byrne: 917-282-5538 or Sharon Trotti: 914-382-9089. Alternatively, you can email your ads to: [themayosocietyofnyjournal@gmail.com](mailto:themayosocietyofnyjournal@gmail.com). All members receive a 50% discount on ads submitted so please support the Society and our great honorees.

Does anyone have any suggestions on what the Society should do when the Mayo football team visits NY in May? Their visit

coincides with Mayo day, on May 5th. It will be a busy time as the team will be playing New York in Gaelic Park. We are also looking forward to 2020 when the Mayo Male Choir comes to NY.

If anyone needs anything during this cold weather like shopping and you can't go out, please let me know and we will always be there to help you. Keep warm and safe, and I am looking forward to seeing you all at our meeting in February. Please remember the sick and deceased.

God Bless,

Betty McLoughlin

## Upcoming Events & News

- **9th Annual Irish Arts Center Book Day.** FREE 8am until the books run out! Fri, Mar 15, 2019. Each St. Patrick's Day, the Irish Arts Center in association with NY City Council, NY State Assembly, Literature Ireland, and Asian American Arts Alliance give away thousands of free books by Irish and Irish American authors as well as those of other cultures. This year, alongside titles by writers of Irish heritage we share stories by Asian and Asian American authors in a celebration of our different and kindred voices. Get your free book on March 15 at one of a dozen Book Day pop-up stations across all five boroughs. Locations will be announced soon. Contact: [rachek@irishartscenter.org](mailto:rachek@irishartscenter.org)
- **Féile na Gaeilge / Irish Language Day: The Sea / An Fharrage**

This full-day immersion for Irish speakers of all levels features music, film, writing, and storytelling workshops exploring Ireland's relationship with the waters that surround it. Hear stories in the language in which they were originally told, sing sea shanties and ballads, watch a cooking demo of a classic Irish seafood dish, and take in an award-winning film, all while practicing your conversation skills. Admission (\$50 general/\$40 members/\$25 students) includes a ticket to the evening's showing of the documentary *The Camino Voyage: An Epic 2,500 km Modern Day Celtic Odyssey*. For information call 866-811-4111 or email [info@irishartscenter.org](mailto:info@irishartscenter.org).

Location: Irish Arts Center, 553 West 51st Street,

**MICHAEL J. QUILL: "A man the ages will remember."  
Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**

Michael Joseph Quill was born in Gortloughera, near Kilgarvan Co. Kerry on September 18, 1905. His Irish-speaking family's home served as headquarters for the No. 2 Kerry Brigade of The IRA during the War of Independence Of 1919-1921. While still a boy of 14, Michael was a dispatch rider for the 3rd Battalion of the No. 2 Kerry Brigade. He organized a group of about 30 boys in the village into an IRA scout group. When the Civil War began in 1922, Quill joined the Republican side against the Treaty. He took part in the re-capture of the town of Kenmare from The Free State Army in August of 1922. After the war, he found himself blacklisted after a sit-in strike with his brother John at a saw mill in Kenmare. He emigrated to New York, arriving on March 16, 1926. Quill found employment with the IRT railroad in 1929, the largest transit company in New York. He worked several jobs before becoming a ticket agent. About half of the IRT employees were Irish, many veterans of the Irish Civil War like him. Moving from station to station, he got to know many of the employees. He said: "During those twelve-hour nights we'd chat about the motormen, conductors, guards etc. whose conditions were even worse. They had to work a 'spread' of 16 hours each day in order to get 10 hours pay. Negro workers could get jobs only as porters. They were subjected to treatment that makes Little Rock and Birmingham seem liberal and respectable by comparison. I also saw Catholic ticket agents fired by Catholic bosses for going to Mass early in the morning while the porter 'covered' the booth for half an hour. Protestant bosses fired Protestant workers for similar crimes, going to Church. The Jewish workers had no trouble with the subway bosses. Jews were denied employment in the transit lines". He then set about organizing a union. He stood on his soap box during lunch hour in power-houses and shops all over the city. On 12 April 1934, Quill, along with six other Irishmen formed the Transport Workers Union of America (TWU). All seven including Quill were members of Clan na Gael, an Irish Republican organization that succeeded the Fenian Brotherhood as the American branch of the Irish Republican Brotherhood. They were said to have applied the rules of secrecy from that tradition. Quill was to remain a silent financial supporter of the Republican cause in Ireland his whole life. The name of the Union was a tip of the hat to James Larkin and James Connolly's Irish Transport & General Workers Union. Thomas H. O'Shea was the Union's first president, followed by Quill, who would remain president for the rest of his life. The Union began with a membership of 400, then eventually represented all 14,000 IRT workers. Quill began to get involved in city politics and was elected to the New York City Council in 1937 representing the American Labor Party. Quill summed up his personal philosophy: "I believe in the Corporal Works of Mercy, the Ten Commandments, the American Declaration of Independence and James Connolly's outline of a socialist society. Most of my life I've been called a lunatic because I believe that I am my brother's keeper. I organize poor and

I fight for the civil rights of minorities, and I believe in peace. It appears to have become old-fashioned to make social commitments; to want a world free of war, poverty and disease. This is my religion."

In 1940, the city purchased the BMT and IRT. Quill dealt with each new mayor from then on. Ahead of his time, in 1944, Quill introduced a bill in the City Council to establish free childcare centers for working mothers. In 1944, he ended a TWU wildcat strike in Philadelphia started by a racist reaction to promotions for 8 black porters. In 1948 he got a large increase for subway workers from Mayor William O'Dwyer, from Bohola, Co. Mayo. In 1961, Quill got a letter from 25 TWU members in Tennessee protesting the Union's support for Civil Rights and de-segregation. He responded by inviting Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to speak at the Union Convention. The two became friends. As far back as 1938, Quill made speeches much like Dr. King's: "If we, black and white, Catholic and non-Catholic, Jew and gentile, are good enough to slave and sweat together, then we are good enough to unite and fight together". In November 1965, John Lindsay was elected Mayor amid the union negotiating a raise for its members. The TWU had threatened a strike that could cripple the city. Before he took office, Lindsay felt empowered and entitled to "call their bluff". He felt such a strike was illegal and would endanger public safety. He also thought the union was incapable of pulling it off. Lindsay was sworn in on 1 January 1966. The same day, 33,000 members of the TWU announced a strike and 2,000 members of the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) joined them. A legal injunction was issued to stop the strike along with an order for the arrest of Quill and eight others effective at 1am January 4th. Quill tore it up and famously said: "The judge can drop dead in his black robes. I don't care if I rot in jail. I will not call off the strike." Two hours after being imprisoned, he suffered a heart attack and was sent to Bellevue Hospital. He had to wait two hours for an ambulance because the strike indeed brought the city to a halt. 15,000 workers picketed City Hall on 10 January. The strike ended on 13 January with a huge victory. The TWU got the workers a package worth \$60 million. Hourly wages rose from \$3.18 to \$4.14 per hour. Quill was released from the hospital on 25 January. He died in his sleep of congestive heart failure on 28 January. His coffin was draped in the Irish tricolor. Upon his death, the TWU Express newspaper reported: "Mike Quill did not hesitate or equivocate. He died as he lived fighting the good fight for the TWU and its members." Martin Luther King said of him: "Mike Quill was a fighter for decent things all his life: Irish independence, labor organization, and racial equality. He spent his life ripping the chains of bondage off his fellow man. When the totality of a man's life is consumed with enriching the lives of others, this is a man the ages will remember. This is a man who has passed on but who has not died."

**Kevin Rooney**