



# The Mayo Society of Greater Cleveland

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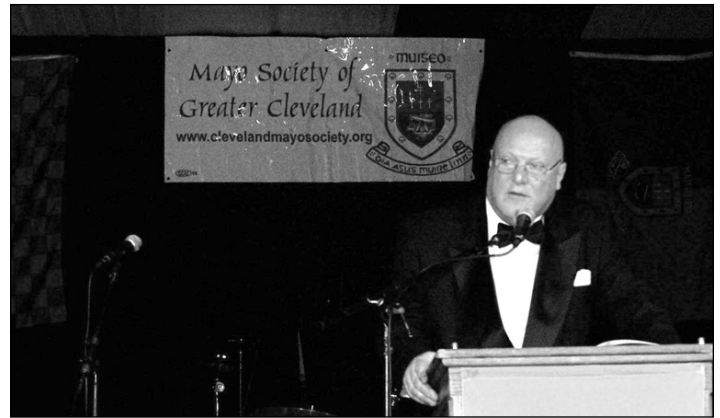
## “A GRAND BALL AND NIGHT!”

by JC Sullivan

Following up on a successful initial venture, the Mayo Society of Greater Cleveland staged a 2nd consecutive event, which drew an even larger crowd than our 2005 Grand Ball. A venue change to Cleveland State University's Wolstein Center accommodated many more than the 2005 could. Event goers were greeted at the Wolstein Center with tri-color fabric hanging overhead, a graceful addition to the venue. Large, round tables easily accommodated everyone with plenty of elbow and leg room to move around and chat with those seated at other tables. Other than having to be seated for the wonderful dinner, a “stowaway” could have entered the event and would not have been wanting of a seat.

Once again, all of Greater Cleveland's Irish organizations supported the event; both the East and West Side Irish-American Clubs, the AOH and LAOH, The Irish Heritage Center, Cleveland Ceili Club and the fun-loving RIPs (Retired/Retireable Irish Police Society).

Mayo-born Gerald “Jerry” Quinn, Event General Chairman and host of a popular Sunday morning radio (heard locally on WHK 1420 AM and around the world on the internet at [www.whkradio.com](http://www.whkradio.com)), said “Today, as we celebrate our organization's success, we also remember the sacrifices of those that preceded us. The



Counsel General of Ireland Sean Farrell

first Mayo Society, which was founded in New York in 1879, served the needs of new Mayo arrivals there, as well as those still living in Ireland.”

This year we saw many prominent Irish American businessmen and businesswomen and politicians at our ball. Sean Farrell, Irish Consul General traveled from Chicago to attend. Our Guest of Honor was Mayoman Frank Durkan, Esq., originally from Bohola and a New Yorker since 1947. Accompanying him was his spouse, Monica. Frank was confirmed in Ireland by my great-grandmother's cousin, Dr. Patrick Morrisroe, Bishop of Achonry. “We called him Packy Joe,” Durkan said.



Kevin McGinty, Regina Costello, Eddie Fitzpatrick



Shirley Chambers, Dan Chambers, Eileen Chambers, Fiona Chambers, Mary Campbell, Kathleen Chambers



Kathleen & Ed Neiger, Tom & Colleen Kilbane, Joan & John Coughlin, Fran Kelly and Donna Leary

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Durkan is famous for several successful defenses he mounted. He represented Desmond Mackin, of the Brooklyn Five. In that case he defeated Great Britain's extradition request in 1981. The opinion rendered by the Court is considered by many in the legal profession to be a landmark decision in Extradition Law. He also spoke of a case referencing the famous Lynchehaun, who hailed from Achill Island, (whose character formed the basis of the famous "Playboy of the Western World) and how he included this story in one of his trials, and won the case. (The full story will be reported in a future newsletter.)

Proceeds from our first Annual Ball supported Our Lady of the Gulf parish in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi and their pastor, Fr. Michael Treacy from Westport. Additionally, funds were donated to the United Irish Societies of Cleveland and to a St. Clarence Church Benefit. The Board of Directors will decide who will benefit from this year's event. Congratulations should be extended to all of them, especially the lovely Event Co-ordinator Colleen Corrigan.

On the evening of the event, the comment we heard most was how friendly everyone was to each other. It is one of the reasons why we have won the hearts of people (over to us) over the centuries. The resilience of our people, in Mayo, America (speaking of both Ireland, County Mayo, America) and other corners of the world, is demonstrated in the abilities that have been given us, genetic abilities honed through suffering, deprivation, displacement and hard work. Our survival and success is due nonetheless to ourselves, our wit and the vision and hope our generations have always kept focused in our inner eye, i.e., our Irish and Mayo spirit.



Monica Durkan, Maura and Judge John E. Corrigan, Judge Mary Eileen Kilbane, Judge Peter Corrigan. Seated: Frank Durkan, Esq.



Pat Talty, Esq. and Bridie Talty, Irish Consul Sean Farrell, Chicago, IL.



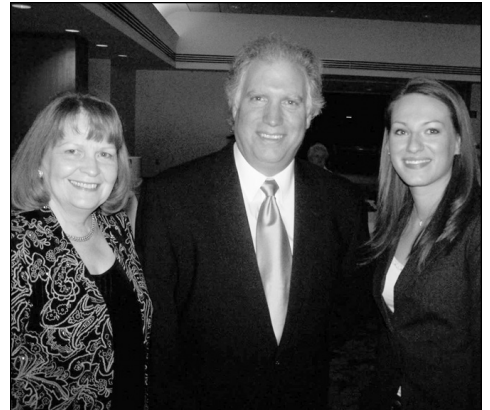
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Steve & Bonnie O'Bryan, Frank Durkan, Esq., Tom Scanlan, Esq.



Brett & Mary Colvard, Colleen Corrigan and Brian Day, Councilman, City of Parma: Margaret Sullivan Chapman, Front Tom & Joann Day, Cairenn Sullivan



Sheila & Bob Crawford and Lauren Federico

## **Proceeds of the Mayo Society First Annual Banquet and Ball Our Lady of the Gulf Catholic Church, Bay, St. Louis, Mississippi**

**F**unds raised as a result of the 2005 charity ball were forwarded to Fr. Michael Tracey, pastor, Our Lady of the Gulf Catholic Church in the diocese of Biloxi, St. Louis. In 1947 Fr. Tracey was born in Killawalla, Westport, County Mayo. He was ordained in 1972 at St. Patrick's Church, Killawalla by Most Rev. Joseph B. Brunini D.D. Bishop of Jackson, Mississippi. Fr. Tracey has been serving in the Mississippi area in various capacities since 1972, initially serving as Associate Pastor of Our Lady of the Gulf Catholic Church. Since 2000, he has been serving as pastor of this same parish. Over the years, Fr. Tracey has involved himself in several committees and associations. Upon the establishment of the Diocese of Biloxi in 1977, Fr. Tracey was appointed its first Director of Youth Ministry. He was Associate Editor of "Mississippi Today", a newspaper for Mississippi Catholics. He was Executive Director of Marriage Encounter for the diocese as well as a member of the Diocesan Priests Council. In 1985, he obtained a Master Degree in Pastoral Ministry from Fordham University, New York. In that same year, he became Director of RENEW (group faith sharing process) for the diocese of Biloxi. During this time, he created several booklets on this topic which are today being used in various dioceses in both the United States and Canada. Fr. Tracey penned several articles for several Catholic publications, including National Catholic Reporter, America Magazine and The Priest Magazine. He also published Woman of Cloth, 1996, Walking Shoes: A Soul Journey, 2002, May the Wind be at your Back – Reflections in the Shade, 2003. His latest book was published in 2006, She was no Lady – A personal journey through Hurricane Katrina. It was upon hearing this story of the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina to the parish of Our Lady of the Gulf that led the Mayo Society of Greater Cleveland choosing Fr. Tracey's parish and school as the beneficiary of funds raised from the first annual charity ball in 2005. Fr. Tracey continues to serve as pastor of this parish.

Our Lady of the Gulf parish was established more than 150 years ago. Many Irish/Irish Americans served a very diverse congregation in the parish including Fr. J.M. Prendergast, Msgr. Michael McCarthy, Msgr. Martin Maloney, Fr. Frank Farrell and others. The original buildings were burned in a fire in 1907, but the cornerstone survived. On August 29, 2005 the parish facilities, school and community were destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. Fr. Tracey heard the news when he was at home visiting family and friends in Killawalla. He returned to his adopted home in Bay, on September 6, 2005 to an unbelievable site. He started to write a diary, an account of what he saw and what he and his parishioners had to face in the difficult months ahead. This writing is titled "The Hell of Hurricane Katrina." Below are excerpts from entries during the early days following the hurricane, as Fr. Tracey and his parishioners tried to come to grips with a new and horrifying reality.

*"September 7....there is a morning meeting...we are told not to be afraid, to be angry, to have a good cry and how important it is to take time for oneself to walk through the grieving process and begin the healing. A priest, a native of Sligo, suffered the same fate as did a priest from Ballygar, Co. Galway. The mood is somber as everyone tries to put on a brave front; tries to dig deep and be strong for their parishioners even though they are falling apart emotionally inside themselves. I have yet to visit my destroyed parish...*

*The Church, almost a hundred years old had lost its roof, some stained glass windows were broken, all the pews were washed hundreds of yards away; the floor had buckled under the pressure of the debris and sand that entered the basement; all the doors had been blown out but the ornate ceiling still remained. The schools were a total disaster. Trees were crumbled like pieces of paper and strewn all over the place....I decided to put down my camera and gingerly walk through the ruins. Negotiating the broken glass, shattered dishes, splintered timbers, occasional piece of cutlery and sanitary ware, I searched not knowing for what but somehow felt compelled to.....Overhead, army helicopters buzzed from place to place ferrying troops and military police...My search yielded very little....I retrieved an orange scissors that used to be in the office; then a family picture....*

*Hours passed as I sipped water and wandered through the maze that used to be my home.* CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

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*My office was a clean and empty concrete slab, my bedroom a small pile of bricks....Finally there was a ray of hope. I discovered a recent family picture covered with mud in the debris.....Soon, curfew time arrived and I had to leave my shattered abode....Tomorrow would be another day to once again confront the demons of Hurricane Katrina. On the way to my temporary abode, we decided to find out the damage to various neighborhoods. They resembled a war torn zone....homes were cut down by a cruel hurricane. In their place, mangled trees and timber reflected the mangled lives of people who once had happy memories there, I was struck by the absence of people. The city resembled a ghost town. Where elegant homes once stood along the beach, now a ravaged forest of trees, concrete, timber and mud. That night, I tried to process my awkward thoughts and finally slept”.*

### **The last entry is dated Sunday, January 1, 2006**

*“A new day! A New Year! A hope that it will be better than last year and that the recovery from Hurricane Katrina will continue. The fog still ties us to the old year – a reminder of things that are hard to forget or cast off...The camera crew from NBC Nightly News arrive early to set up for the 10:30 a.m. Mass. We wait to see their report on the NBC Evening News tonight. Following Mass, we head to New Year’s Dinner with the Favre family. The company is plentiful; the spirit uplifting and the food varied and appetizing. Fr. Louis and his family come by the church to show it to his family and see the progress for himself....Carolyn calls from South Dakota and we chat for a while. She tells me that she made lots of New Year Resolutions but had broken them within a few hours. We all laughed at it. We all need some joy and laughter in our lives. I spend some time reading and then depart to slumber-land”d.*

Note the change in tone and language in the last entry. The cries of help for this parish and its parishioners were heard far and wide. The Mayo Society of Greater Cleveland is glad that it could help in contributing to the recovery of this region. Your help, sponsorship and participation in this annual event enables the Mayo Society to make a real difference in people’s lives and situations. Please continue to support our endeavors and to donate to our society, a 501 c 3 organization, which in turn provides relief to those in need who have a link to County Mayo Ireland.

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## **New Consul General Sean Farrell**

We welcome Sean Farrell to the Irish Embassy, Chicago, commencing in the appointment as Consul General, which serves among other states, Ohio. His first deed in this capacity was that as special guest at the second annual banquet and ball of the Mayo Society in October. Sean comes to us from Dublin, with a well seasoned career. Consul posts include working in the Irish Embassies in London, Washington, D.C., The Netherlands and as Vice Consul in Chicago. From there he assumed the role of Peace Monitor in Croatia during the collapse of Yugoslavia. In the mid 1990s, he served as Deputy Joint Secretary in the Anglo-Irish Secretariat in Belfast before and during the IRA ceasefire. He then worked as Head of Foreign Relations in Ireland’s Mission to the EU, where he headed up the Irish delegation. From there he worked as the Head of the Irish Ministry’s Foreign Trade Section. He recently served as Ambassador of Estonia, Ambassador of Moldova, and comes to the windy city from his post of Director of the Irish Abroad Unit in Dublin, Ireland. Sean’s presentation at the Mayo charity ball touched upon current affairs in Ireland, the Irish abroad, the cultural and economic changes being witnessed in Ireland today. He also noted that Ireland is eager for its families overseas to be proud of our country. I think we already are.

Sean, cead mile failte to the Mid West. We hope to see more of you in our own County Mayo, which is Cleveland, Ohio. Go n’eiri an bothar leat i do phost nua.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WEST SIDE IRISH AMERICAN CLUB ON ITS 75TH ANNIVERSARY

Seventy five years of celebrations and events sharing our Irish heritage has now been documented thanks to Judge Sean C. Gallagher who penned “Volunteers: The First 75 Years of the West Side Irish American Club”. Sean shares the history of the club and many of its members in this publication. A number of functions took place in September 2006 to mark this historic occasion. Several Irish individuals from County Mayo traveled to Cleveland to participate in the festivities, as so many of the members of the WSIA claim ancestry to this great county. Visitors included Pat Kilbane, Chairman, Achill Cleveland Twinning Committee; Tommy Johnston, Chairman, Comhlacht Forbartha Áitiúil Acla; Dr Bernadette O’Leary, Assistant Secretary, Comhlacht Forbartha Áitiúil Acla; Terence Dever, C.E.O. Comhlacht Forbartha Áitiúil Acla; Deirdre Ní Churradhin, Regional Manager, Meitheal Forbartha na Gaeltachta; Stephen Corrigan, Manager, Achill Tourism; Kenneth Deery, Treasurer, Achill Tourism; Kate O’Malley Board Member, Achill Tourism; Peter Hynes, Director of Services, Mayo County Council; Councillor Gerry Coyle, Chairman, Mayo County Council; Councillor Henry Kenny, Mayo County Council; Councillor Michael McNamara, Mayo County Council and Dr. Katie Sweeney, Chief Executive Officer of the Mayo Vocational Education Committee (formerly Director, Galway Mayo Institute of Technology Castlebar Campus.) and Jim Keogh, Manager --Enterprise and Employment Division. The anniversary included a business breakfast held at the Plain Dealer offices, a luncheon kindly hosted by Thomas Scanlon, Esq.; an annual volunteers dinner held at the WSIA; an outing to the Irish American Archives at the Western Reserve Historical Society to view the collection and preservation of Irish history in north east Ohio and a tour of the Crawford Auto Aviation Museum by its’ Director, Allan Unrein; a play produced by Kevin McGinty and Cleveland’s Irish Players; a Gaelic Football Tournament an outdoor Mass and dinner dance. A daughter of Achill Island, Colleen Corrigan co-ordinated the entire program.

### Thank You!

The Board of Trustees of the Mayo Society of Greater Cleveland sincerely thanks you for your generous support at our recent second Annual Charity Banquet and Ball. We will keep you apprised of the recipient’s of the proceeds. Please continue to support us throughout the year. Our mission of making provisions for Mayo related causes depends totally on your open hearts and kindnesses. Help us continue to build a great Mayo Society (501 c 3) by donating what you can to this great cause.

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Dr. Katie Sweeney New Chief Executive  
Officer of the Mayo Vocational Education  
Committee

We send congratulations to a great friend to many Mayo Clevelanders, Dr. Sweeney in her new post. She leaves her position of Head of Centre at GMIT, Castlebar, which she held for six years. Dr. Sweeney is known in Cleveland circles for her role and participation in the Twinning of the Parish of Achill and Cleveland. Dr. Sweeney visited these parts again to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the West Side Irish American Club. She is proud of her roots, and in a recent interview with the Mayo News (October 2006) said “I am from Mayo, living in Mayo and working for Mayo – it doesn’t get much better. I strongly promote all the positive attributes of this wonderful county and do so at every available opportunity.” We look forward to meeting Katie during her next visit to Cleveland, and thank her for her efforts in promoting our county, Mayo.

**A Hero from County Mayo**  
**The Father of the Land League**  
**Michael Davitt (1846-1906)**

Michael Davitt was born in Straide, County Mayo, but the Davitts did not stay there for long. He witnessed his family being evicted from their home when he was a mere 6 years old. His mother and siblings sought refuge from the local priest and his father went to England looking for work and a future. No doubt this experience left a great impression on the young Davitt, one of politics and a desire for a United Ireland, governed by Ireland alone. This desire coupled with his education (paid for by an anonymous benefactor, after he lost an arm working in a cotton mill at 9 years of age) enabled him to change the social structure in Ireland and open the gates to an independent and democratic Ireland. Michael Davitt became the founder of the Land League, a nationalist leader, a pioneer in the Labour Movement, a Home Rule MP (member of parliament) and a GAA (Gaelic Athletic Association) patron. In addition he was a journalist and an author. Davitt joined the Fenians (Irish Republican Brotherhood), serving as organizing secretary in Northern England and Scotland, and organizing arms smuggling to Ireland. While serving time in prison for these acts, in isolation, he came to the conclusion that ownership of Irish land by Irish people was the only solution to the problems in Ireland. Upon release from prison, Davitt became a member of the Supreme Council of the Fenians, speaking frequently and publicly about his desire for Irish land ownership emphasizing that nothing less will resolve any Irish problem. Michael spent time in the United States promoting this cause, gaining support for his policy of "The Land for the People." He married Mary Yore of California, settling in the Land League Cottage in Ballybrack, Dalkey, County Dublin, a present to the couple on behalf of the people of Ireland. Here they had five children, 3 boys and two girls.

In 1879 Davitt organized a meeting in Irishtown, County Mayo with the aim of reducing rents, because poverty levels were dire. Davitt's campaign pressured Canon Ulick to cancel the evictions and reduce rent by 25%. Later, that same year, the Land League of Mayo was founded in Castlebar, with Charles Steward Parnell as a staunch supporter. It was subsequently superseded by the Irish National Land League with Parnell serving as president and Davitt as one of its secretaries. This League was instrumental in uniting all land agitation issues and tenant rights movement up until 1882. This "Land War" sought the "Three Fs" – Fair Rent, Fixity of Tenure and Free Sale. The Land League converted tenant farmers into occupying owners and got rid of the landlord class. It changed the social structure in Ireland in a matter of a few years. It was a huge step towards Irish independence and a democratic nation.

He is one of the most beloved figures in Irish history. County Mayo is proud of his achievements and many causes. We are happy to report that Cleveland holds some history pertaining to Michael Davitt. The Western Reserve Historical Society, ([www.wrhs.org](http://www.wrhs.org)) home to the Irish American Archives, has a cup and a scarf said to belong to Davitt. These items were donated by Helen O'Rourke, as part of the Lawrence O'Rourke Family Papers.

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**Look Out For a New Ohio Irish Monthly Paper**

John O'Brien Jr., author of the Festival Legends Book Series, and Assistant Director of Operations of Cleveland's Irish Cultural Festival, is now embarking upon a new endeavor. He has partnered with Cliff Carlson, publisher of the Irish American News (Chicago) for the purposes of publishing a sister paper in Ohio. The Ohio Irish American News (OhioIAN) will focus on news, people and events of Irish note, in addition to offering articles, book and music reviews, historical information, travel news, and special features, all relating to the Irish American experience in Ohio.

OhioIAN will be available at Irish restaurants, pubs, organizations, businesses, concert halls and festivals, and will be available by subscription. For more information, contact John at 330/321-6174 or [John@songsandstories.net](mailto:John@songsandstories.net) We wish John every success in this venture and look forward to seeing this publication.

## A look at the towns of County Mayo .....

### The County Town of Castlebar

Castlebar (Caislean an Bharraigh, meaning Barry's Castle) was originally a garrison town and was named after a settlement around Barry's Castle during the 11th century A.D. It is a town rich in history and home to a number of the oldest buildings in the country including Christchurch: the foundation stones were laid in 1739. Almost 60 years later, General Humbert and his French army came to Castlebar to join forces with the Irish in an effort to oust the British. The Battle of Castlebar in 1798 was precipitated by a number of reasons, the main one being the British landlords charging excessive rents and tithes, which the Irish simply could not pay. A number of secret societies were established throughout the country, including the Whiteboys and Steelboys, in an effort to fight the rents and tithes. This led to unrest both north and south of the border, leading to sectarianism in the six counties. An ironic note is that a few years earlier, the Irish Volunteers were set up, to help protect Ireland against a possible attack from France. Interestingly enough, it was the French that extended a hand of friendship to help return the land to the Irish. The French involvement in the Rising was not as well organized as it could have been. General Humbert and his troops landed in Killala, and successfully ran a British Army 60 miles from Castlebar to Athlone. The French were forced to surrender in Ballinamuck, County Longford where they were seriously outnumbered. While the battles of

1798 were a failure in its mission, they did however initiate a philosophy that guided future Irish freedom fighters which continues to pave the way towards a free and non-sectarian Ireland.



The above is a banner of the arms for Castlebar, granted in 1953. In this banner, you can see Barry's Castle at the top of the shield. The crossed pikes reference The Battle of Castlebar, which in later became known as Races of Castlebar. The arms were registered in 1953 and were displayed along with the arms of ninety-five other towns and cities on the streets of Dublin as part of An Tóstal - a festival to encourage Irish emigrants to visit Ireland as tourists. Today, Castlebar is a fast growing bustling town in the west of Ireland, with good infrastructure and a number of businesses providing a spectrum of products and services. Numerous tourist attractions are present, including walking tours, angling, golf clubs, horse riding and is a stone's throw from wonderful sites including Ballintubber Abbey, The Ceide Fields, Croagh Patrick and more.

Sources: Outlines in Irish History: Eight Hundred Years of Struggle, Seamus P. Metress, Ph.D., 1995.

Wikipedia

[www.mayo-ireland.ie](http://www.mayo-ireland.ie)  
[www.castlebar.ie](http://www.castlebar.ie)

## Mayo Society of Greater Cleveland

[www.clevelandmayosociety.org](http://www.clevelandmayosociety.org)

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**Nollaig Shona Dhaoigh!**

*Merry Christmas!*

**Mayo Ball –  
we want your feedback.....**

The Mayo Society of Greater Cleveland belongs to its members. This Society is still in its' infancy and we are dependent upon its' members to make it the best it can be. Please provide us with your ideas and comments on how we can continue to make it better. If you would like to volunteer for the Society, or have ideas for events, or have any comments on the annual charity ball, we would love to hear from you. You can do so by sending an email to its president, Jerry Quinn at [quinnirishradio@yahoo.com](mailto:quinnirishradio@yahoo.com) or if you do not have internet access, you can mail your comments to Mayo Society of Greater Cleveland, P.O. Box 19185, Cleveland, Ohio 44119. Thanks for sharing your thoughts and ideas with us.

**The Mayo Society of Greater Cleveland**

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Dated Material — Please Expedite

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