



August 12th: San Francisco, California:

In advance of its forthcoming National Finals, USGAA today announced the naming of a number of National Championships after individuals who contributed to Gaelic Games in the US.

This continues USGAA's goal of acknowledging the important contributions of many individuals to the growth of Gaelic Games in the US. In line with recent years, past members will be honored by the commemoration of different championship trophies with their names in recognition of their service to the organization.

"While Gaelic Games in the US has grown exponentially in the last 20 years, without the dedication and work of our past members, the foundations for that growth would not have existed", said USGAA Chairperson Paul Keane. "As we continue to develop and expand as an organization, it is only fitting that we recognize the importance of their contributions to our success."

Those remembered in 2025 are:

Coleman J. Lydon, Boston

Liam Hegarty, Philadelphia

Mike Moriarty, San Francisco



Coleman J. Lydon
(1924-2015)
Jr A Football



Coley was born in the village of Rusheenamangh, Cara, Co. Galway.

As many of the men born in Ireland at that time, he emigrated to America in 1948 at the age of 24, He started work at the Boston Gas Company and for continuing his ties to Ireland he joined the St. Columbkills Football Club and was a member until he joined Erin's Hope Gaelic Football Club in the late 1950's.

He played for them as well as holding many administrative positions.

Erin's Hope GFC had members from all over Ireland, including Longford, Galway, Meath, Donegal, and Kerry. They also included a large group of Americans playing Gaelic Football.

In 1956 Coley married Brigid McDonagh of Letterard, County Galway. They soon started their family of 7 sons and 1 daughter. Coley then joined the Connemara Gaels Football Club and became a stalwart for the club holding many positions and was a member until he passed away.

He was always cheering the Gaels whether it was at Dilboy Field or Irish Cultural Center. He was also a founding member of the Jamaica Plain Shamrocks GFC, consisting of all American Players. He also supported and held positions of Trustee, and Honorary President for the Boston GAA. He could be found on any given Sunday lining the field at Dibloy in Somerville whether it was raining or 90 degrees! He was a hard worker and a voice for what was good for the GAA.

He also held the position of Honorary President of USGAA and what was most important to Coley, he enjoyed it and seeing things done right.



Liam Hegarty
(1967-2018)
Intermediate Football



Liam Hegarty was first and foremost a husband to Maureen and dad to 4 boys: Billy, Patrick, Kevin and Michael. He was born to Bill and Betty Hegarty and spent a number of years living in Ednamuck, Co. Donegal, before settling in Kells, Co. Meath.

Kells is where Liam developed a life-long grá for all things GAA. As a youth, Liam was involved with the local Gaeil Colmcille club before leaving Ireland and settling in the US in the late 1980's.

Upon settling in Philadelphia, Liam immediately got involved with the Donegal Philadelphia GAA Club both as a Club Officer and a player. He took great joy in the club's various successes over the years. As Liam transitioned from player to spectator, he became heavily involved in youth GAA. His first involvement was at local level with the Philadelphia Youth Board. This eventually led to the founding of the Delaware County (Delco) Gaels. He left quite a legacy behind – all 4 boys have played senior football for Delco – a feat he would be very proud to see.

As youth GAA grew across the US, Liam, along with like-minded GAA supporters, was instrumental in forming the Continental Youth Championship (CYC). Having been instrumental in its founding, Liam served the CYC in many roles over the years. He continued to assist in the development and growth of CYC until 2015 when he received the honor of being the Presidential Appointee to chair the CYC Steering Committee. Liam led the committee through 2018 and was set to continue on into 2019. Liam was also the vice chairperson for the USGAA Adult Board.

He served the community in a number of ways, whether it was through the GAA, the dance community, or the Irish community in general, and was always willing to give his time.

Liam had a strong vision for the future of youth GAA and had his own way of navigating discussions which ensured others felt heard. No matter what the problem, large or small, Liam had a solution for it.

Despite his time and commitment to the GAA and other pursuits, Liam was dedicated to his family above all. He relished his time with them and ensured his home was the gathering place for parties and celebrations. He proudly watched his sons compete, and was a perpetual presence on the sidelines at youth events.

Liam was a constant presence in the USGAA for decades and his influence, ideas and innovation have been felt throughout the adult and youth clubs here in the US.



Mike Moriarty

(1945-2024)

Jr. B Ladies Gaelic Football



Mike Moriarty was born in Tralee, Co. Kerry. At the age of three, Mike and his family emigrated to San Francisco. His family joined the Kerry Athletic club and there Mike learned the skills of Gaelic football at an early age. He had a passion for Gaelic Games. He always loved playing as a forward and became a skilled free taker, scoring 9 points from frees to help the San Francisco Kerry team win the 1963 replay of Western Division Senior Football championship.

In 1967, due to a lack of immigration, Gaelic games stopped being played in San Francisco for 10 years. In 1977, Mike and a group of fellow Gaels reinstated the Western Division GAA. Mike played for the Shannon Rangers and chaired the club for many years.

At the age of 15, Mike was the youngest person to serve as secretary of the Western Division Board. Mike was chairman of the Western Division Board for many years. Mike did whatever was necessary to see that games were played. He lined fields, put up nets, made flags, built and painted goalposts, was umpire, linesman and referee. While chairman, Mike promoted all sports and was instrumental in getting the Ladies Football Added to the North American County Board competitions. In 1993, Mike was recognized by the North American County Board with a special merit award to recognize his contributions to the GAA in North America.

In December of 1991 as Chairman of the Western Divisional Board Mike asked for a motion to be put forward at North American convention to include Ladies football in North American championships. A motion was put forward at the North American AGM in Las Vegas by Michael Cusack's San Francisco to allow women into the championship competition. After a long debate and forceful arguments by San Francisco's Niall Flynn (Cusack's), the motion was passed: ladies would play in a Senior competition in the North American championships games in 1992.

A huge advocate for youth while chairman of the Western Division Board, Mike traveled to Ireland with the first San Francisco Feile team. After leaving the Western Division Board, Mike became PRO of the San Francisco Youth GAA.

Mike was extremely proud of his Irish heritage and also involved in many other Irish organizations. He was a board of director and president of the United Irish Cultural Center and board of director and president of the United Irish Societies.

He was chairman of the 150th ST Patrick's Day Parade and Grand Marshall of the 2011 St Patrick's Day Parade.



“Each of these members served our Association in different but important ways.” said John O’Brien, one of the founding members of North American County Board in 1959. “Our goal in 1959 was to create a structure that brought all GAA people under the one umbrella. This then led to the emergence of events like this coming weekend’s USGAA Finals, where teams from each corner of the US compete for a National Championship.”

Founded in 1959, USGAA (previously North American County Board) is the Governing body of Gaelic Games in the US, outside of the area under the jurisdiction of the New York GAA Board.

With approximately 8,500 members at all codes, ages and levels, the pinnacle of the year is the USGAA Finals. This year’s showpiece event will see 110 teams play over 100 full-scale Championship games, as they compete for 22 National Titles across all 4 codes: Camogie, Football and Hurling.

To learn more about the 2025 USGAA Finals, in Malvern, Philadelphia (from August 15th – 17th), please visit:

www.usgaafinals.com

To learn more about USGAA activities throughout the year, please visit:

www.usgaa.org

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