



North Mayo Heritage Centre
Mayo
Heritage
Newsletter

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GLENROE

25 years off our screens

We profile one of the main actors

MICK LALLY

Image: rte.ie

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Mick Lally – stage, TV and film actor

The final episode of the well-known Irish soap GLENROE was broadcast 25 years ago this month, on May 6, 2001.

Its most well-known character, **Miley Byrne** was played by Tourmakeady actor Mick Lally. Here we remember Mick Lally who sadly passed away on 31st August 2010.

Mick Lally was born to Tom and Mae Lally the 10th November 1945 in the village of Derryveeny, Tourmakeady Co. Mayo. Mick was the eldest of seven children, five girls and two boys. They lived on a 30-acre hill farm. He attended the local national school before attending St. Mary's College Galway and then University College Galway. It was here he found his love for theatre.

Mick became a history and Irish teacher and taught in Tuam between 1969 and 1975. But he had another calling, acting. As a result, he gave up his job and became one of the founding members of the Druid Theatre Company along with Garry Hynes and Marie Mullen. They worked with many Irish playwrights.

Their first production was JM Synge's "The Playboy of the Western World" in which he played the role of Christy Mahon.

This was only the beginning, he also became a member of the Field Day Theatre Company and starred in the 1980 premiere of Brian Friel's play *Translations* and in many more productions. His first appearance at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin in 1977 was in "Wild Oats".

In 1982 he appeared alongside Brenda Fricker in the award winning film "The Ballroom of Romance", set in Ballycroy. The following year he took on the role of Miley Byrne in a new RTE soap *Glenroe*. which was a continual character from a previous show, Bracken. He became a household name playing a quiet innocent farmer in Co. Wicklow. The end of everyone's weekend was marked by Glenroe which was broadcast just before the 9 o'clock news. It ran successfully for 17 years, topping the ratings each week.

Other productions that Mick Lally starred in include the film "Circle of Friends" written by Maeve Binchy in 1995; *Ballykissangel*, a BBC series; *Ros na Rún*, an Irish language series; *Stumpet City*, *The Year of the French*, *The Secret of Kells*, *Alexander*, plus many more.

He married his wife Peige in 1979. They had three children together. Mick Lally died after a short stay in hospital on the 31st August 2010.

In September 2011 the Druid Theatre, Galway, unveiled a seat in their foyer to remember his work and lifelong involvement with the theatre and his love of the Irish language. In fact, the Druid Theatre in Galway was renamed The Mick Lally Theatre in 2011 to honour his legacy.

After his death many politicians expressed their condolences. The Taoiseach said that he "was shocked and saddened to hear of his death", adding that he was "one of the most loved actors of his generation and that "he would be missed". The Irish Examiner commented that "the nation had lost one of its favourite uncles". The well-known saying from the TV series, Glenroe "**Well Holy God**" will always be associated with the character Miley Byrne played by Mick Lally.

Sources:
Irish Examiner
RTE.ie
Mayo.ie

Hello May

Old sayings associated with the month of May:

'Never cast a clout until May is out' is an expression warning of not shedding too many winter layers until the end of the month of May.

Weather in the month of May can forecast what was expected to follow in the summer:

A wet May and a dry June makes the farmer whistle a tune.

A swarm of bees in May is worth a load of hay.

A wet and windy May fills the barns with corn and hay.

If the ash should bud before the oak, then we're sure to have a soak., If the oak should bud before the ash, then we'll only have a splash".

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