

## Honoring Nancy Kelly

Nancy C. Kelly, who helped raise millions of dollars for equine research and for individuals in need throughout the Thoroughbred industry over the course of a 32-year career at The Jockey Club, died February 9 in Garden City Park, N.Y.



Kelly was 71 years old and had been battling ovarian cancer since February 2019, approximately one year after she retired.

As the vice president of development for Grayson-Jockey Club Research Foundation and the executive director of The Jockey Club Safety Net Foundation, Kelly organized countless fund-raising events ranging from golf tournaments and ladies' luncheons to formal gala dinners. She also managed domestic and international racing conferences, including The Jockey Club's annual Round Table Conference on Matters Pertaining to Racing and multiple editions of the Pan Am Conference in New York City.

Kelly had worked in the clubhouse relations department of The New York Racing Association before The Jockey Club chairman Odgen Mills (Dinny) Phipps, who became a longtime friend and cherished colleague, recruited her to join The Jockey Club staff in 1985.

"Nancy had hundreds if not thousands of friends throughout the Thoroughbred industry, and she was as universally respected and admired as much as anyone I've ever known," said Stuart S. Janney III, the chairman of The Jockey Club. "She was the face of The Jockey Club in many ways and no one was ever a better representative of our organization. Our sincere condolences go out to her entire family."

Kelly, a native of New Hyde Park, N.Y., and a resident of Westbury, N.Y., maintained a longstanding and deep appreciation for the backstretch community and served in a variety of key volunteer roles in the creation and/or development of several Belmont Park-based organizations. Among them were the Belmont Child Care Association and the New York Race Track Chaplaincy.

She was named president of the chaplaincy shortly after retiring from The Jockey Club at the end of 2017 but stepped aside shortly thereafter due to her illness. From then on, she served as the vice president and as a board member.

"This is a sad day for anyone who ever knew Nancy and that includes all the racetrack chaplains around the country with whom she worked on a regular basis," said Humberto Chavez, the lead chaplain and executive director of the New York Racetrack Chaplaincy. "She was a humanitarian in every sense of the word and took great joy in helping others."

Though Kelly avoided the limelight at all costs, she was often honored by organizations and community groups for her service to the industry and nearby communities. Among many other

honors, she received the Race Track Chaplaincy of America's Award of Excellence, the Jockeys' Guild's Eddie Arcaro Award (presented annually to a person who shows exceptional commitment to jockeys and the organization) and the New York Turf Writers Association's Red Smith Good Guy Award.

Kelly is survived by her sister, Fran Dtugokenski; brother-in-law, Ray Dtugokenski; nieces Lisa Locurto and Michelle Mirabile; and four grand-nieces and two grand-nephews. Kelly's late husband, Jack Kelly, an Equibase chartcaller and field supervisor, died in November 2010 after a long battle with polycythemia.

The wake will be held Monday, February 12, at 9 a.m. at the Leo F. Kearns Funeral Home, 445 E. Meadow Avenue in East Meadow, N.Y. It will be followed by a Mass at 11 a.m. at St. Brigid Catholic Church, 85 Post Avenue in Westbury, N.Y.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to The Jockey Club Safety Net Foundation, the New York Race Track Chaplaincy, or the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York City.

Donations in Nancy Kelly's name can be made to The Jockey Club Safety Net Foundation through its website [tjcfoundation.org](http://tjcfoundation.org) or by check, payable to The Jockey Club Safety Net Foundation and mailed to The Jockey Club Safety Foundation, 250 Park Avenue, Suite 2020, New York, NY 10177.

Donations in her name to the New York Racetrack Chaplaincy can be made through its website [rtcany.org](http://rtcany.org) or by sending a check, payable to the New York Racetrack Chaplaincy, to the New York Racetrack Chaplaincy, PO Box 37191, Elmont NY 11003.

Donations in her name to Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center can be made at [giving.mskcc.org](http://giving.mskcc.org) or by sending a check, payable to Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, to Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Office of Development, PO Box 27106, New York, NY 10087.