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Man who Saved NY from Bankruptcy Dies

Hugh Carey, the man widely reputed to have saved New York City from bankruptcy in 1975 after he was elected Governor of New York state, had died at the age of 92.

Carey, an Irish American, was also known for his stand against the war waged by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in the '70s. Together with 3 other prominent politicians, speaker Tip O'Neill, and senators Ted Kennedy and Daniel Moynihan who were known as the 'Four Horsemen', Carey sought a peaceful solution to the conflict in Northern Ireland.

In 1977, the Four Horsemen issued a statement on St Patrick's Day denouncing the violence in Northern Ireland and appealing to the IRA to "renounce their campaigns of death and destruction" and to American organizations to stop supporting them. This statement proved pivotal in curbing aid to the IRA from Irish Americans.

Later when Carey visited Dublin, he made a ferocious attack against the IRA in a speech titled, 'The Politics of Death' at the Royal College of Surgeons, labeling them killers and Marxists. In view of the campaign launched by the Four Horsemen, President Carter made the move of promising more American aid to Northern Ireland if a peaceful solution to the conflict could be found.

In the 70's and 80's, Carey opposed Irish-American fundraising in the New York area through the Irish Northern Aid Committee (Noraid) because he suspected them to be

supporting the Provisional IRA. So he personally went to Ireland to create his own network of influential contacts North and South. Hugh Leo Carey was born in Brooklyn in 1919. He read law and after his studies, he worked for a time in his father's business before launching into politics. Carey was elected to Congress in 1960 on a Democratic ticket and represented Brooklyn there until 1974. In 1974 he stood for election to run for governor of New York, succeeding the Republican, Nelson Rockefeller. Carey easily won the election.

But he took over at a critical time when the city of New York was in serious financial distress due to lavish spending on building projects by his predecessor. It seemed inevitable that the city would have to file for bankruptcy, which would have meant a major disruption to public services.

Carey formed a task force to shore up the city's finances and made frequent trips to Washington to seek federal aid. At first, President Ford was not compliant which led to the famous headline in the New York Daily News, "Ford to City: Drop Dead". But later, President Ford relented and made federal funds available. Carey's rescue plan worked and the city was saved. Last year, a book was published chronicling Carey's career entitled, 'The Man Who Saved New York'.