



# THE CITY OF BRUNSWICK MARYLAND

1 WEST POTOMAC STREET · BRUNSWICK, MARYLAND 21716 · (301) 834-7500

*Distinguished Citizen biography for:*

## **Frank Strakonsky, Jr.**

1917-1992

*Honored as a Distinguished Citizen in 2026*

It might surprise you to know that one of the longest serving members of Brunswick's City Council was not a native of Brunswick.

Frank Strakonsky, Jr., was born on December 28, 1917, in Chicago, the grandson of a young couple who had immigrated from Bohemia (today's western Czech Republic) in 1882, finding work there as a locksmith. Their son, Frank Sr., worked most of his life as a custodian for the Chicago Board of Education and at City Hall. He later worked at a jewelry store.

Frank Jr. was raised in Chicago along with his older sister Bessie and younger brother Charles ("Mulligan"). As he got older, he found work at Burton Dixie, a Chicago company that manufactured furniture, in sales and delivery, eventually becoming coordinator of deliveries.



With the onset of WWII, Frank joined the U.S. Army. He qualified as a sharpshooter with an M-1 rifle in spite of a bad eye, but his limited vision prevented him from serving on the front lines, and he was assigned to "Camp Detrick" in Frederick, Maryland, where he worked as a supply clerk until he received his honorable discharge on February 17, 1946.

While at Detrick, Frank found weekend entertainment by traveling to Brunswick to go to the dances there. It was on these trips that he met Betty Lee Cornelius, who had been born and raised in Brunswick. Frank became acquainted with her family and they often invited him to spend the weekend with them. Their relationship bloomed, and the day after he was discharged from the Army, Frank and Betty got married. They lived with Betty's parents in Brunswick and eventually assumed ownership of that home when her parents died. Frank and Betty would eventually have three children: Frank, Gary, and Terri (Benson), whom they raised in that same home.

Brunswick was a railroad town, and so, with his clerical experience in the Army, Frank soon got a job as a clerk on the railroad. Initially, he worked the midnight shift at the Washington, D.C., terminal, checking trains as they arrived. Eventually there was an opening in the Brunswick office, and Frank spent the rest of his 31 years with the railroad working in the Caller's Office in the basement of the old YMCA, still working the night shift.



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Twenty years after moving to Brunswick, Frank decided to run for City Council. He won that first election (1966) and four subsequent elections (1970, 1974, 1982 and 1986), often as the top vote-getter, and served on the City Council until two years before he died, for a total of 20 years. (His obituary says 22 years, but that could not be independently verified.)

Frank loved his service on the Council. He was a “hands-on” man. When it snowed, he rode with the Public Works guys as they cleared the streets. When there were work projects, he was often there with his sleeves rolled up to help. Projects with which he was deeply involved included securing and/or upgrading the Waste Water Treatment Plant, the medical clinic that was located in the building beside City Park, the Brunswick Medical Center, the new Middle School, the community swimming pool, the Brunswick Shopping Center, and the Brunswick Family Campground.

He was a member of American Legion Post 96, frequently assisting with funerals of veterans. He was treasurer of the Moose Club and a member of the Eagles Club. He was also an honorary member of Brunswick’s Volunteer Fire Company and helped Sonny Cannon procure new equipment when it was needed. He was a member of the Senior Citizens’ Center and was elected president of that organization shortly before his death. He and his wife were members of the New York Hill Methodist Church.

Betty died in 1984. Frank died eight years later, on Jan 31, 1992, of an apparent heart attack. They are both buried at Park Heights Cemetery. In 1998, their children added a memorial brick in their memory in the sidewalk in front of the museum.

Frank Strakonsky, Jr. loved Brunswick. He loved going to the little league baseball games. He loved going to the Veterans Day parades. And he loved his family, supporting his children as they participated in sports and taking the time to teach them basic skills for successful living. This Chicago-born transplant blessed Brunswick in many ways.

*The Mayor and Council and the Brunswick History Commission are proud to honor Frank Strakonsky as a Distinguished Citizen of Brunswick, Maryland.*