

October 1995

Dear Member:



Welcome to the New York chapter of the Imperial Court, the oldest and most prestigious organization of its kind in the world today. We sincerely hope that your association with the Court will be a long and fulfilling one. For your pleasure and information, a packet has been prepared for newly-sponsored members. We are certain it will provide you with answers to many questions you might have, but if not, please feel free to contact any member of the Board of Directors and we will do our best to help you.

Included in this packet you will find:

- A brief history of the Imperial Court System and the New York Court.
- An application form for friends you may wish to sponsor for membership.
- A membership roster including titles and positions of all current members.
- A phone-tag list including the Board Member who is assigned to call you to pass along timely information.
- A copy of our Constitution and By-Laws with which you should become familiar.
- Your membership card.
- Membership Profile Form
- A Journal from the most recent Night of A Thousand Gowns.
- A list of commonly asked questions and answers.

Again, welcome and best wishes.

Sincerely,


Johnny Cella (212) 807-7239
Vice President and Membership Chairman

The Imperial Court of New York

In 1965, José Sarria, the country's first openly gay political candidate (for San Francisco Supervisor) founded the Imperial Court System and set the Court standard of humor, heart and humanitarianism that today governs more than 50 royal courts in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

The Imperial Court of New York is part of this proud tradition. The Court is a social, fund raising organization, (most notably through the annual Night of A Thousand Gowns) and has donated back into the community more than \$125,000 to both social service organizations and AIDS support groups, including:

**The Lesbian & Gay Community Services Center
Gay Men's Health Crisis
The People with AIDS Coalition
National Gay & Lesbian Task Force
Community Health Project
Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation
The Human Rights Campaign Fund
Hearts & Voices
The Gay & Lesbian Anti-Violence Project
Body Positive
People with AIDS Health Group
Senior Action in a Gay Environment
Gender Identity Project
Hetrick-Martin Institute (Harvey Milk School)
Gay Games IV & Cultural Festival.**

The Court is also a favorite attraction as a part of many community fund raising events. They have been invited to participate by the following organizations, (among many others):

**GMHC's AIDS Walk, Dance-A-Thon and Fire Island Morning Party
Empire State Pride Agenda's White Party
The New Festival
Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS
The Center's Joan Rivers Show at Town Hall and annual Garden Party
HRCF's Inaugural Party at the Supper Club
PWA Coalition's Heart & Soul
In-the-Life Auction
God's Love We Deliver.**

They also produce annual Tag Sales on Fire Island, and co-host the Halloween Ball at The Center. Of course, the Court's fabulous float is always a crowd pleaser during the Gay and Lesbian Pride Parade. The Imperial Court has been at the forefront of our community for the past ten years. Other than raising money and educating the community at large on diversity issues, the Imperial Court is also out there entertaining PWAs at hospitals, distributing condoms at Grand Central Station, joining in the March on Washington, entertaining senior lesbians and gays at SAGE socials, and so on. The members of the Imperial Court are people who have chosen to make a commitment, get involved, and make a difference in the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. They are glamorous. They are fun. They are everywhere.

The Imperial Court of New York, is, above all, the members: The Emperors and Empresses, Princes and Princesses, Dukes and Duchesses and the leagues of uncommon courtiers who are proud of being whom they are and challenge others to be the same.

Questions and Answers about the Imperial Court of New York



Q: *What are the requirements for membership in the ICNY?*

A: To become a member of the ICNY, you need to be sponsored by a current member in good standing of the Court, and ratified by a simple majority of the members. Membership is open for three months each year (September, October, and November).

Q: *Can I join after Night Of A Thousand Gowns?*

A: Applications for Associate Membership will be available for one (1) month following The Night Of A Thousand Gowns. Associate Members have all the rights and privileges of full members.

Q. *What constitutes a "member in good standing"?*

A: Membership in good standing status, which carries with it all the rights and privileges of membership as per the enclosed By-Laws, has three basic requirements:

- 1) Payment of annual dues (\$30.00) at the first meeting of the fiscal year (September).
- 2) Attendance at 50% (or more) of the general membership meetings for the fiscal year.
- 3) Plus at least **one** of the following:
 - a) Participation in at least two (2) Court affiliated fund-raisers/philanthropic events.
 - b) Purchase (or sale) of one (1) advertisement in the annual NOATG Journal (this may be your own ad at reduced members' rate).
 - c) Participation on at least ICNY event working committee (may include NOATG committees, Halloween Dance, etc.)
 - d) Attendance at one (1) or more out-of-town event.

Q. *What are my responsibilities as a member?*

A: Basically, your responsibilities are to uphold the purposes of the Court, as outlines in the enclosed By-Laws.

Q: *What rules are used to make decisions within the Court?*

A: The ICNY is a democratic organization overseen by the nine-member Board of Directors and governed by a Constitution and By-Laws, and Robert's Rules of Order, a classic document which explains parliamentary procedure, the appropriate way to conduct meetings and other such issues.

Q: *How is the Board of Directors chosen?*

A: The Board of Directors consists of the original incorporators of the Imperial Court of New York, and the Officers and Board Members who are elected by the general membership at the beginning of the fiscal year. (For a more detailed explanation, see By-Laws, Section 12.)

Q: *There are members in this organization who have different "titles." Are they earned or awarded, and how?*

A: Titles are administered in a number of ways: Upon membership, all members are given the rank of Lord/Lady. After one year, all members in good standing are elevated to the rank of Baron/Baroness. This is the only automatic elevation. Beyond the Baron/Baroness level, members may be elevated in one of two ways:

- 1) Elevation by the Board of Directors: This type of elevation is based on meritorious service to the organization. Board initiated elevations are generally announced at the Victory Brunch following the Ball or immediately prior to the Ball. Board elevations may also be made at any time for outstanding service to the Court, and/or the community at the discretion of the Board. Titles are permanent and for life; that is, they are retained until further elevation or as long as the member retains good standing status within the organization.
- 2) Elevation by the incoming Monarchs: The incoming Monarchs traditionally bestow titles on his/her "family" members. These titles must also be approved by the Board of Directors. The purpose of Board approval is to deter favoritism or the capricious elevation of individuals who may be undeserving of additional recognition.

Q: *What constitutes meritorious service to the Court/Community?*

A: A member may serve the Court and the Community in a number of ways:

- 1) Active participation in events sponsored by or attended by the Court.
- 2) Proposing new events for consideration to the Board.
- 3) Sponsoring or chairing Court events.
- 4) Serving on a Standing/Special Committee (see below).

Q: *What are Standing Committees and Special Committees?*

A: Standing Committees are Committees which, once created, will remain in existence from fiscal year to fiscal year. One example would be the Membership Committee, which the Vice President automatically Chairs. Special Committees are those Committees which are formed temporarily, usually for a specific amount of time, at the bequest of the Board of Directors or the President, to fulfill a specific function. The Ball Committee would be an example; after the Ball, the Committee is disbanded until the following year, when it will be reformed.