**BIOGRAPHY OF JEFFREY DUDGEON MBE**

Jeff Dudgeon has lived most of his life in Belfast (b. 1946) and worked in the Department of Health at Stormont dealing with public health issues until his retirement. He stood as a Labour candidate in the 1979 Westminster election for South Belfast and for a University of Dublin seat in the Irish Senate in March 2011 to offer an alternative voice from Northern Ireland.

He was the successful plaintiff at the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) at Strasbourg in a six-year case whose 1981 judgment on Article 8 relating to the right to a private life led to the passing of the October 1982 law in Northern Ireland decriminalising consenting, adult, male, private, homosexual behaviour. This was a European first and a precedent quoted in the US Supreme Court Texas sodomy case. After the ECHR case started in 1976, he was among some 25 people from the Northern Ireland Gay Rights Association and Cara-Friend arrested by the RUC. Criminal charges against him and others were agreed by the prosecutors in Belfast despite the offences being legal in England. The prosecution was only discontinued at the last minute by the Attorney-General in London. His case features amongst other UK sexual orientation ones in the recent book ‘Going to Strasbourg’ by Paul Johnson (OUP, 2016).

His was the first successful gay case under the European Convention for Human Rights and has been the starting point and foundation stone for a number of more radical judgments, and the later change in the Convention’s protocols bringing about anti-discriminatory protection for gay men and lesbians.

Jeff Dudgeon’s book on the life of Roger Casement and the authenticity of his famous diaries was published in 2002 entitled *Roger Casement: The Black Diaries – With a Study of his Background, Sexuality, and Irish Political Life.*

A 2nd extended edition was published in 2016 and a 3rd in 2019 <https://amzn.to/2uJCY6r>. It is now a 800-page biography with extensive diary transcriptions and many photographs. The book includes the never-before-published erotic 1911 journal, and deals with the authenticity controversy on the diaries. Casement, the gay Irish revolutionary, knighted British consul and human rights campaigner (Congo, Peru) was executed for treason in 1916. In 2016, Jeff also published *Roger Casement’s German Diary 1914-1916* <https://amzn.to/2MpNaaD>.

The controversy has not died down as some still argue the diaries were forged by the British.

Jeff continues to work on gay law reform issues, and in liaison with the police in relation to crimes against gays and lesbians, and in assisting those charged with criminal offences or in other legal difficulties. He was awarded an MBE in the 2012 New Year Honours List for “services to the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community in Northern Ireland.” He has continued working on a series of campaigns getting reforms like Civil Partnership and equalised age of consent laws passed into Northern Ireland law.

He was instrumental in getting the gay pardons and disregards legislation extended to Northern Ireland in 2016.

In 2013, he was one of the Ulster Unionist Party’s two negotiators at the Haass/O’Sullivan talks on the issues of Flags, Parades and the Past.

Jeff is the author in 2018 of ‘*H. Montgomery Hyde - Ulster Unionist MP, Gay Law Reform Campaigner and Prodigious Author’* <http://amzn.to/2BCOp0J> and that year edited the book *‘Legacy: What to do about the Past in Northern Ireland?’* <https://amzn.to/2Ef1OgR> .

Chair of the South Belfast Ulster Unionist Association for many years, he was elected as an Ulster Unionist to Belfast City Council in 2014 for the Balmoral DEA. He became a member of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee (vice chairman 2017/8), the Licensing Committee also vice-chair and was formerly chair of the Council’s Diversity Working Group. In 2019 he lost his seat to the DUP.

He is currently convenor of the Malone House Group on legacy.

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