

ENTERTAINMENT

MAYWOOD

Author draws on family history for her new book

BY TONYA HOLMAN
Staff Writer

A local woman's book based on her family's past has finally been published.

Maywood resident Mona Rodriguez' novel titled "Forty Years in a Day" was released in February. Rodriguez is a mathe-

matician, an environmentalist, and a mother.

"I wasn't a writer by the longest stretch of the imagination, but I had a story to tell and I knew it had to be told," she said.

Rodriguez explained the story has been in her head for years fueled by tales of her family's past. She coauthored the book with her

cousin, Dianne Vigorito.

"She gave me the support and validation I needed to pursue this project. I was lucky to find a family member to work with, and she had an immediate interest in the idea," Rodriguez said. "We started by writing down the stories we had heard and interviewing the elders that were still alive. We worked on our own, and we also worked together several days a week, collaborating, rewriting and editing."

"Forty Years in a Day" begins in 1900 and follows the incredible journey of a young mother (Rodriguez' grandmother) and her four children as they escape from Italy into the streets of Hell's Kitchen in New York City. The story deals with a woman knowing the father of her children was living a double life with another woman, but she loved him so much that she overlooked the arrangement rather than forfeit the man. (Her parents).

"In between are the stories that I heard from family members who lived through an era that we can only read about, intertwined with a twist of fiction and sensationalism to fill in the gaps," she said.

Rodriguez said getting a publisher was not an easy process. She and her cousin attended book expos and pitch conferences to learn about the publishing industry while writing and rewriting their story.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MONA RODRIGUEZ

Maywood resident Mona Rodriguez' novel "Forty Years in a Day" was released in February.

"I mailed more query letters to agents and publishers over the years than I care to admit. Getting a publisher didn't happen overnight and, once we did, it took over a year in production — developmental editing, copy editing, layout and cover design — before it was released," she said.

Rodriguez will be doing a book signing at the Maywood Public Library on June 12 at 7 p.m. "Forty Years in a Day" is available at Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble, Powell's Books, Books-A-Million and iBookstore.com.

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