



Mary Elizabeth Denison

May 22, 1932 - May 4, 2022

Mary Elizabeth Denison died of natural causes on May 4, 2022 in Traverse City Michigan – she was 89 years old. Born May 22, 1932, she was the daughter of James Clair O’Connor and Eulela May Rush O’Connor and raised in Birmingham, Michigan on Oakland Avenue. She had many wonderful memories of her home and childhood where she was the fifth of nine O’Connor children ... but we all know she was really just “one-of-a-kind”.

She attended Holy Name Grade School and Parish and graduated Shrine High School. Mary attended Michigan Normal College (EMU), but her post-secondary education was cut short in her sophomore year. This was due to “having a bit too much fun” - she recounted in an interview while at her Bay Ridge residency in Traverse City. Her father, whom she dearly loved, sent her brother-in-law to bring her home. She was disheartened about not knowing what to do when the idea of being an air travel “hostess” took shape in their conversation. It provided her with many of the things she was looking for; a career, the ability to travel and meeting new people.

She flew with American Airlines until she married Donald B. Denison, and together they had four children - Elizabeth, David, Cass and James. Don worked for IBM - short for “I’ve Been Moved”. Mary packed up her Michigan family and moved south for ten years - first to Athens, Alabama, then to Atlanta, Georgia, raising the family in a culture very different from which she

was raised, but she adapted quite well.

In 1972 they moved back to Birmingham, Michigan, where most of her extended family lived...including many nieces and nephews.

Mary was an extraordinary woman - a member of the Michigan Mother's Association - a Master Bridge player and teacher - warm and friendly - cut from her own cloth - full of laughter - deeply spiritual and curious - an avid reader and lover of books - kind to children and strangers – social, pretty and elegant in her day - very independent... and a wee bit eccentric.

After thirty years of marriage, Mary returned to the single life and began a career teaching bridge. At age 70, she moved to Lake Oswego, Oregon for ten years and lived across the street from her daughter, Elizabeth and her family, where she also taught bridge at the Senior Center for eight years. At 80 she moved to Traverse City, Michigan and lived at the Bay Ridge Complex to be near her son David and his family.

Mary suffered from dementia for many years but was social, physically fit, comfortable and well cared for by her family and the excellent staff at Bay Ridge. Her sense of humor and Irish sparkle still shone through to the very end.

We were also grateful for her peaceful passing and knowing she knew God and welcomed this transition.

Mary was pre-deceased by her father, mother, former husband Donald and siblings Patrick O'Connor, James O'Connor, Marjorie Seery, Richard O'Connor, Joseph O'Connor and Michael O'Connor.

She is survived by siblings Terrence O'Connor and Susan Kirkland, all of her

children - Elizabeth Martin (Jeff) of Lake Oswego Oregon, David Denison (Nancy) of Traverse City Michigan, Cass Denison (Patricia) of Birmingham Michigan and James Denison (Shelley) of Grosse Pointe Michigan, and ten grandchildren - Kira Denison, Sam Martin, Drew Denison, James O'Connor Martin, Lucy Martin, Joe Denison, John Denison, Jack Denison, Claire Denison, and Lt. Charles Denison. - and seven great grandchildren - Penny Denison, Augie Martin, Luke Martin, Jack Martin, Max Martin, Isla Martin and James O'Connor Martin Jr. along with many, many loving nieces and nephews.

Cremation has taken place as per her wishes. No funeral services are planned. A Mass in her name is scheduled for 8:30 am Sunday June 12, 2022 at Christ the King Catholic Church, Williamsburg, MI. The family is being served by Wolfe-O'Neill Funeral Home and the Cremation & Burial Society of Michigan.

Donations or memories in her name can be directed to Hospice of Michigan, The Children's Literacy Project (www.childrensliteracyproject.org) or a contribution to your local library

Tribute Wall



“ *Mary Elizabeth Denison*

January 30, 2023 at 04:02 AM



“ *Mary Elizabeth Denison*

January 30, 2023 at 01:03 AM



“ *My Aunt Mary was the Aunt everyone hoped to have! She was so fun and energetic! Her spirit was always visible even among our large gatherings that could total more than 100. She was always immensely interested in everyone and showed her love to her numerous nieces and nephews! Her love and kindness lives on in her children and all of us. I will so miss my dear, sweet, loving Aunt, but I know she is at peace and spreading even more love! God Bless you and keep you Aunt Mary. ❤️
Mary Lee and Gary Longe*

Mary Lee Longe - May 19, 2022 at 10:50 AM