
Mary Jane Bender Pugh

Mary Jane Bender Pugh
November 26, 1931 - October 5, 2013
Cary

Mary Jane Pugh died at home on Saturday, October 5, 2013 from cancer. She was born in Berrien County, Michigan, to the late Glenn and Jennie Meiners Bender. She graduated from St. Joseph, Michigan, High School in 1948 and received her bachelor's degree from Grinnell College in 1952. She was an ardent supporter of the value of a liberal arts education. In 1970 she earned a Master of Science degree in chemistry from the University of Pittsburgh.

In 1953 she married Harry Pugh in Charleston, WV. When Harry retired in 1979, they moved from Pittsburgh to North Carolina. They shared forty-five happy years of marriage until his death in 1999. They joined the faith community of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Cary upon arrival in NC. She was active in many ministries there over the years but her favorite was always welcoming newcomers to the church and knitting them into the community. After her retirement from Burroughs Wellcome in 1994, she volunteered in the Surgical Waiting Room at Rex Hospital for seventeen years.

Mary Jane loved walking the beach at her beloved Outer Banks, tending her many beautiful flower beds, playing bridge, and baking her famous blueberry pies and lemon cookies. She advocated passionately for what she believed in, she was respected for her counsel and leadership, and she was admired for standing up to say the things that needed to be said. But most of all, she cherished personal relationships, and was always surrounded by people. She kept up with college roommates, neighbors, and colleagues from Iowa to Charleston to St. Louis to Pittsburgh to Apex and Cary, maintaining connections through her dozens of annual Christmas phone calls in lieu of sending cards. In her final days, she clung to life so she could see and hear from the many friends and loved ones who will miss her dearly.

Survivors include one son Thomas and wife Muri of Durham, one daughter Jennifer and husband Chip O'Connor of Wilmington, DE, four grandchildren, Jathan and Joshua Pugh and Carlton and Margaret O'Connor. Also surviving are a step-daughter Mary Pat Peck and husband Garry, two stepdaughters-in-law Janet Pugh and Linda Pugh, three step-grandsons Richard, James, and Derek Pugh, and four step-great-grandchildren, Caitlin, Michael, Connor, and William Pugh. Predeceasing her in addition to her husband were one son, Christopher, two stepsons David and John, and six siblings.

A Memorial Service will be held at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 221 Union St., Cary on Saturday, October 12 at 2:00 pm. Following this service there will be a celebration of her life in the church Parish Hall. Friends are invited to come and meet the family and to remember times shared with Mary Jane. Memorials to the Outreach Ministry at St. Paul's are welcome in lieu of flowers. Interment of ashes will be private.

Special thanks to the wonderful faith community of St. Paul's for all their love and support over the years. Thanks also to the very caring staff at Rex Cancer Center and especially to Dr. Susan Moore and Dr. Ken Zeitler, and to Hospice of Wake County and Ideal Healthcare Services.

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