

MARY EILEEN AQUILINE

"EILEEN"

Age 89, died September 23, 2023, in Glen Allen, VA.

Shy as a girl, Eileen grew up to be fun-loving, outgoing, and good-humored. She made many friends in her youth whom she kept for life. She was open-minded and openhearted: her default position was acceptance of all and prejudice towards none. She loved a good party (whether she was the host or a guest), was the first one on the dance floor at weddings and pushed back the table and chairs in her dining room to teach her kids The Alley Cat, The Hully Gully, and Irish reels. A master at holidays, Eileen made decorating Christmas cookies an event, threw epic New Year's Eve parties, elevated birthdays to feast days, and built unforgettable last-minute DIY Halloween costumes. She was an avid reader from girlhood on, an expert crossword puzzle solver, and a champion Scrabble player. At mid-life, for the love of learning, she took art classes at Community College of Allegheny County—Boyce Campus and at Carlow University.

Mary Eileen O'Shea was born May 21, 1934 in Pittsburgh PA, the oldest child of Michael and Nora (Stack) O'Shea, who were immigrants. They handed down a strong Irish identity, firm ties to family in County Kerry, and the values of their Roman Catholic faith. Eileen attended Holy Rosary School in Homewood and then St. Paul's Cathedral High School, where she performed in the operettas and excelled at both academic and business classes.

She was an exceptionally skilled administrative assistant at Bacharach, Inc (promoted to personal secretary to the president), Westinghouse, Air Carbon, and Parke Interiors.

At the Bacharach bowling league she met Michael (Mike) Aquiline, who was struck by her beauty, marched up and introduced himself, and brashly asked if she was already "taken." She laughed at him. And the rest is proverbial history. Mike and Eileen were married on May 30, 1956. They were together for 67 years. She embraced and was embraced by Mike's family as if they were her own.

Eileen was a global traveler with a curiosity about other places, people, and cultures. At 18 she took her first of many trips to Ireland, followed over the years by excursions to Italy, Russia, the Dominican Republic, Israel, Egypt, Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Sweden, Finland, Germany, and France, among others. Eileen traveled most of the United States, often at the wheel of the family van driving cross-country and visiting national sites with her family.

She served for many years as a local Democratic Committee Member, Judge of Elections in her voting precinct, and campaign volunteer for candidates up and down the ballot.

Eileen suffered the most devastating experience a parent can endure when her son Michael died in 1987. She mourned him for the rest of her life while still learning how to move forward. She also never got over the loss of a stillborn baby, whose absence she always felt deeply.

She was also predeceased by her parents and her mother-in-law, Pasqualina Aquiline; her sister Sally O'Donoghue; and many relatives, in-laws, and close friends.

Besides her husband Michael, Eileen is survived by her children Carol, Christine Schwartz (Craig), Carlyn, Carin (Christopher Boyd), and Matthew (Laina); her grandchildren Eamon (Abigail), Kaylen, Andrea, and Liam Schwartz, Aedan Aquiline, Lune Aquiline and Rowan Boyd, and Michael, Mason, and Hiatt Aquiline; her great-grandchildren Cohen, Bodhi, and Stella Schwartz; her siblings Jack O'Shea, Brenda Stokes, and Joan Pupik and sisters-in-law Til DiTommaso and Hilda Luffey; many nieces and nephews; and many cousins in the U.S. and Ireland.

A Mass in memory of Eileen will be held on Saturday, November 4, 2023 location to be announced.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in her name to Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh or Shriners Children's.

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