

MARY JO FISHER



On Friday November 15, Mary Jo (DiPerna) Fisher, 85, of Swissvale and Plum Borough, PA, passed peacefully at home surrounded by family. Mary Jo was preceded in death by her husband of 61 years, Francis J. Fisher of Swissvale, as well as her parents, Paul DiPerna and Elizabeth Smith DiPerna. She is survived by her children, Tom (Janet), Josie (Mark Kubaska), Evie, Frank (Jane); and seven

grandchildren, who meant the world to her, Liz, Tom, Rob, Joe, Peter, Matthew and Maura Fisher. Also survived by her dear brother, James DiPerna (Eileen); and sister-in-law, Diane Brady (late James); and numerous nieces and nephews.

Mary Jo was a 1956 graduate of Sacred Heart High School in Pittsburgh, and attended St. Francis School of Nursing, graduating with her RN degree in 1959. Later, after working in clinical nursing at Magee-Womens' Hospital, and at Columbia Hospital while her children were young, she progressed into healthcare administrative roles, while also obtaining her Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration and Management from La Roche College. Mary Jo was a pioneer in many ways—a founding employee of Central Medical Pavilion, a physician-owned hospital formerly located across from the old Civic Arena in Pittsburgh's Hill District. There she introduced the process of utilization review, at that time a fledgling quality assurance process encompassing clinical and business functions to assure consistent quality of patient care. After evolving that department, she was recruited to help start up the first physician Preferred Provider Organization in the region, Alpha Health Network, as Director of Benefits Management (another new concept that is now a cornerstone of managed care and standard to the provision of healthcare).

She was among the generation of women who entered the workforce and, through their sheer presence, competency, and perseverance, paved a path for future generations of women to follow, all while maintaining just as strong a presence and impact as a wife and mother. She imbued in her children and grandchildren a sense of citizenship and ethic of volunteerism, having served her hometown as president of the Junior Women's Club of Swissvale—with notable endeavors, including an urban tree planting campaign that contributed to Swissvale's designation today as a Tree City USA. She liked to sing and perform, and is remembered for her annual enthusiastic performance as Mrs. Santa Claus at the organization's luncheon with Santa. She was politically passionate, and a strong proponent of the importance of voting. A supporter of civil rights, she always had posted in her office an excerpt of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s I Have a Dream speech.

In her role as mom and grandmother, she was always happy to bring anyone into the fold, give them a big mom hug and kiss, and make sure they had plenty to eat. She would do anything for her family, and her caring and support were always present to her children, grandchildren and extended family.

Mary Jo was loved by everyone she touched. She loved to share confidences, family memories and grandchild reminiscences, a simple meal or sweet treat, a day at the casino (win or lose), a Sunday football/pizza afternoon with grandkids, hilarious stories about beloved family pets, board games with sisters-in-law and friends, dinners out with family, or a good laugh with anybody! She will be remembered for her kind, loving, determined, generous and joyful spirit. She will be greatly missed by all who knew her.

If desired, donations can be made to the League of Women Voters of Pittsburgh <https://lwvpgh.org/> or a charity of your choice. Services will be private.

Private arrangements have been entrusted to **THE ANTHONY M. MUSMANNO FUNERAL HOME INC.**

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