

MARIE RITA GAROFOLO



Marie Rita Garofolo passed away peacefully at home, in Houston, TX, on the March 20, 2025, surrounded by family and loved ones. She leaves behind a legacy of faith, family and selflessness that will endure for generations.

Born in Pittsburgh, PA, the third of six children of the late Erma (Bakara) and Michael Joseph Zahorchak, Marie reminisced often of joyful memories during her youth of time spent with her mother, siblings, cousins and extensive Hungarian family. Uniquely similar to her aunts, Marie was beautiful, kind and elegant. During her years at St. Thomas High School, she met the love of her life, and the man who would become her husband of fifty-five years, William James Garofolo Sr. Upon graduation, she explored career options and attended Carlow University. After she married, however, Marie's true passion immediately became her family, and she devoted herself to her husband and children. She was an active and guiding presence in their daily lives, leading by example to instill the Christian values that she held so closely.

In addition to being an extraordinary mother and role model, Marie was a truly remarkable and immensely talented individual. She was an accomplished seamstress, exquisite needlepointer, and quilter. She was a fabulous cook, creating the healthiest versions of her family's favorite foods, and an extraordinarily gracious hostess. In addition to large family gatherings for holidays, children's birthdays and team parties, she and Bill welcomed their families for decades to an annual Christmas Eve midnight Mass and holiday party, celebrated by her brother, a Catholic priest. Marie's selflessness extended well beyond her family to the community as a life-long volunteer dedicated to her church, her children's schools and activities, countless Catholic causes, ladies' associations and for many years, the Carnegie Natural History Museum.

Marie's many interests included hatha yoga, and she was one of the early yoga instructors in Pittsburgh. She taught and practiced yoga throughout her entire life, sharing with many her passion. She enjoyed and supported the performing and visual arts, and loved to travel. She traveled with Bill, her children and grandchildren throughout Europe and the U.S., delighting in learning so much. The most special destination in the world, however, for she and Bill, was their home in Naples, FL. They spent decades enjoying the beautiful beach, warm, sunny days, new experiences and close friends. Marie was especially fond of the lovely ladies she volunteered with for many years at St. William Catholic Church in Naples. Certainly, their fondest and most cherished memories were, undoubtedly, those created during visits with their grandchildren. They so loved their family.

After Bill passed away, Marie moved to Houston to be close to her daughter, granddaughter and son-in-law. She enjoyed her many years in Houston, both living with her family and at nearby Tradition Woodway, where she met many new friends, and founded a weekly Eucharist service sponsored by St. Michael catholic the Archangel Catholic Church.

Marie was preceded in death by her beloved husband, William James Sr.; siblings, Fr. Michael, Rita, Thomas and Martha; and survived by her loving children, William, Jr. and Jamie; daughter, Susan and Nicholas; son, Gregory and Lauren; adoring grandchildren, Nick, Gaby and Katie; her brother, Francis, and numerous nieces, nephews and nieces.

A Mass of Christian Burial and her burial will be at a date yet determined.

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