



Mary T. Helgans

May 11, 1940 - February 22, 2019

Mary Theresa Helgans died Friday February 22, 2019 in her sleep due to a complication related to her 2012 stroke, at her residence at Seabrook Village, Tinton Falls, NJ.

She was born in Manhattan, NY on May 11, 1940 and raised in Staten Island, the second child of John and Kathleen Doherty. Her father advised his children that they either go to college or work for the city. Her brothers entered the New York City Sanitation and Fire Departments and Mary was the first in her family to extend her schooling. She earned a teaching degree as a scholarship student at City College of New York, graduating in 1961. She studied physical and health education. She married Robert E. Helgans Jr on January 21, 1961 and followed him to Virginia for completion of his ROTC Army commitment. Their first child was born at Fort Belvoir. They returned north to raise a family in Chester, NJ. While Robert worked at Bell Laboratories, Mary was a homemaker and part-time aerobics, swim, and gymnastics instructor until her teaching career in Chester Township schools began in 1971. She retired in 1999, collecting a masters in education and (at 50) registered nursing degrees along the way. During the summers she taught youth and adult American Red Cross Water Safety.

Her enthusiasm for adventure was evidenced in her initiation of family camping trips, skiing, and bicycling activities. She will be fondly recalled as a person with exuberance for life, with generosity to excess, and with an innate ability to find the beauty in most any person she encountered.

She is survived by her husband Robert, brothers John J., James P. and Thomas F. Doherty, her children Veronica Helgans (Gregory Turner), Mary Frances Shaw (Michael Shaw), and Robert E. Helgans III (Elizabeth Helgans) and grandchildren Graham and Isabel Turner, Josephine and Thomas Shaw, and Delaney, Charlotte, and Jasper Helgans.

Her life will be celebrated at an as yet undetermined date, but condolences may be expressed on her memorial page at www.bongarzonefuneralhome.com, and, in lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to Wounded Warrior Family Support.

Previous Events

All services are private

FEB 23 (ET)

Bongarzone Funeral Home
2400 Shafto Road
Tinton Falls, NJ

Tribute Wall

MR

“ My sister, Karli, and I grew up with Mary as our next door neighbor and also swim instructor. I fondly remember her lessons and "pull, tickle, T!" instructions. She was always so much fun to be around and had a twinkle in her eye! We were so lucky to have her so close by and will always remember her lessons and vivacious spirit.

Misha and Karli Robyn

Misha Robyn - February 27, 2019 at 10:48 PM

RO

“ We (Annie, Hae-Sun and Glenn) ran with Mary many weekends in the village of Peapack-Gladstone and fondly remember Mary's incredibly positive spirit! Although we were 15-20 years younger than Mary, Mary zipped up the 1/2 mile hills with zest and smiles! Some of the runs ended with a wonderful cup of coffee and a kind hug from Mary.

"May the road rise up to meet you. May the wind always be at your back. May the sun shine warm upon your face and rains fall soft upon your fields, ..."

We will truly miss Mary's warm smile, wonderful wit and kind heart.

Love,

Rocie Park and Glenn

Rocie - February 27, 2019 at 06:04 PM

SS

“ Mary...my running buddy when we taught at Dickerson...you could run 5 miles at a brisk pace and talk about how proud you were of your whole family at the same time! You were a great gym teacher...the students told me that they remembered you as the fun gym teacher with the many brightly colored sneakers...lime green, purple, and red! Physical activity was your passion...teaching gym, rafting in the Grand Canyon, skiing, swimming, rock hounding, and more! Mary will always remind me to keep going and keep moving whatever the circumstances! I will miss you! Love, Sharon Smith

Sharon Smith - February 27, 2019 at 03:26 PM

BD

“ So many beautiful memories of a woman,sister,wife,mother,grandmother & friend. She was a loving soul with a great wit,intelligence & beauty all her own. The world would be a better place with more people like her. Will think about you Mary with love & quite a few smiles! Our lives are better because of you & will miss you so much. Reggie,s forever! Love, Tommy & Barbara

Barbara Doherty - February 26, 2019 at 06:15 PM

JD

“ I am so sorry for your great loss.all my love and sympathy goes out to the family. I loved Mary we had many good times together. She was always involved with my children when they were young. Even though I haven't seen Mary for awhile she was always in my thoughts and in my heart. Mary is now at peace and in heaven with her mom and dad.

Janet Doherty

janet doherty - February 26, 2019 at 02:49 PM

JD

“ *Janet Doherty lit a candle in memory of Mary
T. Helgans*



janet doherty - February 26, 2019 at 02:28 PM

DD

“ Aunt Mary was the Matriarch of the Doherty clan. She was loved admired and now honored through her husband, her children, her brothers, her grandchildren, nieces and nephews and so many more that that knew her. She was direct, honest, sincere and wise. She way sharp witted and very funny. Her company was easy to enjoy.

Her father loved poetry, calling to mind a few lines from Waldo Emersons poem To Succeed

*To laugh often and much
To win the respect of intelligent people
To gain the affections of children
To earn appreciation through honest critics ...
To find the best in others
To appreciate beauty in all its nature
To leave the world a better place
Whether by a healthy child, a garden patch...
To know one life has breathed easier
Because you have lived,
This Is to have Succeeded*

Aunt Mary was all these things. Connecting with her her family , branches of my family tree made me proud to be a Doherty. With much grace and gratitude for knowing her and having her as family - she will be missed. Heartfelt condolences - Denise

Denise Doherty - February 26, 2019 at 01:39 PM

KZ

“ Aunt Mary you will be missed. I will never forget all the fun times at your house and the sleepovers so many wonderful memories with you and the family. Veronica. Robbie and Mary Francis and uncle Bob you are in my thoughts and prayers. She was an amazing Aunt and Godmother and I will never forget her. NEVER! She is with Grandma and grandpa now so now we have 3 Angels on our shoulder.

Kathleen zukowski - February 26, 2019 at 01:08 PM

KZ

“ Kathleen Zukowski lit a candle in memory of Mary T. Helgans



Kathleen zukowski - February 26, 2019 at 01:01 PM

SR

“ She was such a dynamic woman, and her sense of adventure always amazed and inspired me. I always loved listening to her talk about her trips, and to hear the stories about her children and grandchildren, whom she loved deeply. Her legacy will live on in them. I will miss her terribly.



Sandi Robertson - February 25, 2019 at 03:25 PM

BH

“ *Bongarzone Funeral Home lit a candle in memory of Mary T. Helgans*



Bongarzone Funeral home - February 23, 2019 at 01:36 PM