



## Phyllis Jean O'Neil

May 1, 1942 - October 18, 2019

On Friday, October 18, 2019, Phyllis Jean O'Neil loving wife and mother passed away at the age of 77.

Phyllis was born on May 1, 1942 in Wyandotte, Michigan to Eugene and Margaret Isloa. She earned a college degree and worked as a Tax Accountant for Kelly Services International of Troy, Michigan. Phyllis previously worked for several banks including Mount Clemens Bank, Michigan National, and Bank of the Commonwealth where she met her surviving husband of 57 years, Patrick Francis O'Neil of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Together they had four surviving sons Eugene Charles, Kevin Patrick, and identical twins Sean Michael and Brian Matthew.

Phyllis spent much of the 1960s and 1970s raising her family, taking care of her household, chasing her sons around and discovering what new mischief they could create on a daily basis. She also spent time helping them with homework, driving them to baseball practice, taking them to various Metropolitan parks and beaches, roller skating, bike riding, and various travels in Michigan and around the country. She did all of this with the help of her husband Patrick. Phyllis also gave her sons ample time to play outside, go to the school yard, dig holes, play in dirt or with the water hose, play in pick up baseball or football games, play army with sticks, neighborhood hide and seek, pickle or any other activities that would keep her boys busy. She would also make sure they delivered their newspaper routes, and on rainy days would drive them around the neighborhood to get the papers delivered.

Needless to say, Phyllis also spent many hours at the grocery store, the meat market, the fruit market, and local vegetable stands (for some reason back then they weren't all in the same place) in order to keep her boys and husband well feed. Phyllis made a sit-down dinner for her family every night at around 5:00PM. Phyllis was 100% Italian and a great cook of many Italian dishes of spaghetti and meatballs, lasagna, mostaccioli, penne, rotini, gnocchi and every other type of Italian noodle always with her sauce which was the best. Phyllis also cooked up meat and potatoes, pot roast, pork roast, pork chops, roasted

chicken, meat loaf, spare ribs, country ribs, short ribs, Italian sausage, along with toasted cheese sandwiches, BLT sandwiches, Hamburger Helper, burgers, and hot dogs. Phyllis always made her boys eat salad and vegetables at dinner – unless we were having the favorite “breakfast for dinner” meal which could be scrambled eggs bacon and toast, pancakes, or waffles.

Phyllis was also an accomplished baker and regularly made cookies, pies, and cakes. We always had to stay out of the kitchen when Mom was making a cake because apparently running around and jumping in the kitchen could make the cake “drop” or “fall”. I’ve never heard of this again later in life so maybe it was just a way for Phyllis to get some refuge, peace, and quiet.

Phyllis and Patrick also made sure the family was at church every Sunday and on church holidays. Phyllis always inspired her son’s faith by reminding them that “God is watching you!”. She also volunteered as a Catechism teacher at St. Ephrem Church.

Once all of her boys were of age to attend grade school Phyllis went back to work and landed a job at Mount Clemens Bank. She raised her sons to be fairly independent and to look out for each other so after school we had an hour or so at Home Alone before Dad and Mom came home from work. Mom still made the sit-down dinners making great use of new kitchen inventions such as the Crock Pot and microwave oven. Phyllis also went to work earning a college degree in Accounting from Macomb Community College at night, and when she wasn’t at work, taking care of her family, or in class – she was studying. There were many times this son would wake up late at night, go out to the upstairs hallway landing, and see my Mom sitting at the dining room table with her books, notebooks, and calculator studying and doing homework.

Phyllis also played the piano and we were lucky enough to have a piano in our home. She encouraged her sons to play musical instruments including the piano, guitar, trumpet, clarinet, and saxophone. She found money in the household budget for lessons and instruments before her sons were able to participate in band at school. Phyllis was an avid singer and was in her church choir for 17 years. She was also very supportive of her son Sean’s love for drama/acting helping him with several high school plays and hosting a cast party to celebrate a production.

After earning her college degree Phyllis landed a position at Kelly International, the Kelly Girl people, in the tax department as a Tax Accountant. Phyllis was responsible for filing tax returns in every state and some other US territories. She finished her career at Kelly and retired in 1998.

Meanwhile in 1980 at the age of 38 Phyllis became a Grandmother when her son Eugene and wife Tina gave birth to Ryan Patrick O'Neil. She was not expecting to be a Grandmother at such a young age and frankly initially wanted to kill my brother but eventually came to the conclusion that stuff happens, embraced the role, and was supportive of her son and his new family. Besides little Ryan Patrick was a little cutie, had a sunny disposition, and was just a grandmother's dream come true. Many more grandchildren would follow eight to be exact and when Gene and Tina had Shannon Brienne – after four boys of her own and a grandson Phyllis finally got the girl in the family that she always wanted! Mom always said that the twins Sean and Brian were supposed to be Kelly and Kimberley.

Later in the 1990s Phyllis was blessed with Allison Paige and Mackenzie Taylor who were born to her son Kevin and his wife Veronica. Her son Brian and his wife Melissa gave birth to Madisen Bailey and Brian Matthew (2001). In the 2010s her family grew with the addition of Eugene's current wife Shannon and her twins Ashlyn and Mason. By now her grandchildren were having children and Mom had more of them to love with the addition of Finnigan, Harrison, and Griffin being born to her first grandson Ryan Patrick and his wife Brenda, and the twins Hadley and Hudson being born to Shannon Breanne and her husband Kevin and his two children Emma and Ross which makes seven great grandchildren.

Born in Wyandotte, Michigan on May 1, 1942, Phyllis grew up on the east side of Detroit on Iroquois Avenue until her father Eugene built a home for his family on Lakeview Drive in St. Clair Shores, Michigan. Phyllis was the oldest child of Eugene and Margaret Isola who also gave birth to her brothers Arthur and Ronald. Eugene came from a large Italian family from Mount Pleasant, Pennsylvania with many, many uncles, aunts, and cousins. The family would travel from Detroit to Mount Pleasant regularly for many holidays, visits, and the annual Isola-Gaudio Family Reunion which traditionally took place over Labor Day weekend. This past August Phyllis again traveled with her family back to Mount Pleasant for the 75th annual family reunion and she was honored to be the family patriarch as the oldest living blood Isola. It was a visit that Mom thoroughly enjoyed.

Phyllis' father Eugene passed away in his early 40s just months before her wedding to Patrick. She always maintained a very close relationship with her mother and her two brothers and many weekdays, weekends, and any holidays were spent at the house on Lakeview or at one of the sibling's homes. The combination of her four sons and Arthur and his wife Anna's three sons, Jeffery, Danny, and David (cousin Brad was a later addition) made a perfect recipe for havoc at any family gathering. Phyllis had more nieces

and nephews from her brother Ronald's children Jonathon, Julie, Jennifer with wife Teresa, and Michael with wife Kimberly.

Grandma Margaret was helping her daughter as much as Phyllis was helping her Mother and Grandma Margaret was a permanent fixture in our lives. I don't think but a few days ever went by without a visit from or visiting Grandma Margaret. Nicknamed "Philly and Maggie" by her sons, the two of them could win any Christmas Shopping Marathon, any day, any time. And this was back in when you had to actually go to the store to go shopping.

Phyllis and Patrick's family always traveled whether it was camping in Michigan, traveling around the country to visit relatives, camping in the Grand Canyon, Disney World and Disney Land, San Diego, Mexico, or going to Las Vegas. Phyllis and Patrick usually made an annual trip to St. Augustine, Florida where they would stay on the beach. When Phyllis retired from Kelly they made trips to Alaska, Ireland, Italy, Hawaii, the Caribbean, and the United Kingdom.

Phyllis was an avid golfer with an incredible looking unorthodox golf swing. She loved their traveling golf club the Vagabonds that was made up of other couples that would go on golf trips around Michigan usually close to a casino. Phyllis was also on a golf league with her girlfriends which sounded like it was just as much about lunch, cocktails, and cards as it was about playing golf. I don't think they even kept score. She always loved getting together with "the girls".

Phyllis and Patrick always had an annual Christmas party at their home for all of their friends. There was plenty of food, deserts, music, card playing, cocktails, and always a special theme cocktail for each party. Phyllis was always a great hostess no matter the event.

In April 2019 she was diagnosed with small cell lung cancer. She went through her treatments, scans, weekly blood tests, hospital stays, poking and prodding like a champ. Rightfully complaining at times, but always finding a way to put a smile on her face. She was not only concerned about her own condition, but worried about her family and how it affected them.

She was quick to tell any friend, relative, neighbor, nurse, doctor, physician assistant, or infusion specialist how great her family was, how they all loved her and were there for her, traveling across country or traveling across town, she said she had a great family and they were taking care of her.

Mom you taught us very well about family, love, and taking care of your loved ones.

Phyllis passed away on October 18, 2019 at 1:15PM surrounded by her family with her grandchildren sitting around her bed, holding her hands, playing her music, and loving her.

# Events

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**OCT 22**    **Visitation**                      03:00PM - 09:00PM

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Mandziuk & Son Funeral Directors, Inc. - Sterling Heights  
3801 18 Mile Road, Sterling Heights, MI, US, 48314

**OCT 23**    **Instate**                      11:00AM - 12:00PM

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SS. Cyril & Methodius Slovak Catholic Church  
41233 Ryan Rd, Sterling Heights, MI, US, 48314-3937

**OCT 23**    **Mass of the Christian Burial**                      12:00PM

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SS. Cyril & Methodius Slovak Catholic Church  
41233 Ryan Rd, Sterling Heights, MI, US, 48314-3937

# Comments

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“ Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of Phyllis Jean O'Neil.



October 22, 2019 at 08:50 AM

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“ Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Phyllis Jean O'Neil.



October 21, 2019 at 05:03 PM

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“ Scott, Kathy, Alexandra & Aaron White purchased the Beautiful Heart Bouquet for the family of Phyllis Jean O'Neil.



**Scott, Kathy, Alexandra & Aaron White** - October 21, 2019 at 02:31 PM

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“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Phyllis Jean O'Neil.



October 21, 2019 at 10:44 AM