



Mary Konat

DEC 11, 1922 - OCT 3, 2010



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Mary Elizabeth Phelan was born December 11, 1922 outside of Omaha, Nebraska. Her parents were farmers in the area and she was one of five children. She graduated from high school in Mead, Nebraska in 1940. She went on to become a registered nurse and in that endeavor met the man who would become her husband and the father of her eleven children. She looked like Judy Garland and in 1943 while in nursing school at St. Catherine's in Omaha a young dentist, Dr. Edward J. Konat, took notice. They fell in love and were married October 17, 1944.

They started their family before her husband was shipped off to Saipan during World War II. Mary gave birth to their first child while he was away and the Army captain had a 14 month old son when he returned. Mary, for her part, lived dutifully with his parents while her husband finished his commitment with the military. It was a favor she would return many years later.

Mary and Ed moved to Grand Island in 1946. Dr. Konat established a thriving dental practice and Mary spent her time unselfishly raising and educating ten more children. She was a classy woman who was a stickler for grammar and it seemed as if she could spell every word you ever heard. She insisted on manners and the slightest vulgarity was treated with disdain.

She was a wizard in the kitchen and to this day people talk about the voluminous meals she prepared almost every day. The welcome mat was always out at the Konat house and cabin at Johnson's lake. She frequently fed as many friends as family, and the guests would often ask their own mothers if they could find out how Mrs. Konat does it.

As if all this was not enough, when the call came from the pulpit at the local Cathedral for a family to accept a foreign exchange student into their home, Mary was the first to suggest it was the right thing to do. She convinced her husband and some of her kids. She did so not just once, but three times. For many years afterwards she would proudly read the correspondence she received from those students.



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Her experiences reached well outside the confines of her enormous responsibility at home. She regularly accompanied her late husband on big game hunts to Wyoming and fishing trips to Colorado, South Dakota, Minnesota and Nevada. She took hundreds of road trips with her husband and family as her children established lives of their own in several other states. She openly marveled at the wonder of her growing family in the many grandchildren whom she came to know and love dearly.

She traveled internationally to Spain, Africa, Poland, Ireland, England, Mexico, Holland, and Italy. She wasn't perfect, she could dance and whistle, but she couldn't sing.

Mary was a devout Catholic and she lived by example. She never missed mass and went to confession even when she didn't need to. She was very active in the Altar Society and often welcomed the local priests into her home. Like her late husband, she was committed to helping those who were less fortunate.

She was afflicted with Parkinson's disease almost 20 years ago. In her typical fashion she did not feel sorry for herself nor did she complain. Mary and Ed spent winters in Arizona, and California before living full time for a number of years in the dry heat of Nevada.

That too would pass when they decided to move back to the mid-west so they could be much closer to their immediate family. In 1996 Mary and Ed moved to Clinton, Iowa where they had immediate access to ten grandchildren and were within driving distance to many more.

Mary lost the love of her life when our Father preceded her in death on April 29, 2004.

This remarkable woman died peacefully in Clinton, Iowa on October 3, 2010 with four daughters at her side. She is survived by Mary Jo (Bob) Eads of Clinton, Iowa; Debbie Konat of Vancouver, Washington; Kristie Dolton (Tom) of Grand Island; Greg Konat (Teresa) of Burnsville, Minnesota, Irene Entsminger (Gary) of Miles, Iowa; James Jude Konat of Seattle, Washington; Felix Konat of Vancouver, Washington; Marcia Konat of Vancouver, Washington; and Thomas Konat (Linda) of Shorewood, Minnesota. Mary has 26 grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren.

While alive Mary would say there was nothing graceful about growing old, in death she proved otherwise.



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Mass of the Christian Burial will be 10:00am, Wednesday, October 6, 2010 at the St. John's Cathedral on the Creighton University Campus. Visitation will be from 9:00am to the service time at the Cathedral. Interment will follow in the St. John's Cemetery. The Johnston Mortuary – Omaha, Nebraska and the Snell-Zornig Funeral Homes and Crematory – Clinton, Iowa is assisting the family.



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Mary by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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