



## Loretto Sugrue Golden Cowhig

April 6, 1947 - October 1, 2021

Loretto Sugrue Golden Cowhig, 74, of Kankakee, died Friday (October 1, 2021) at Riverside Medical Center.

She was born April 6, 1947 in St. Louis, MO, the youngest child of James Golden and Virginia Sugrue Golden.

Loretto received a bachelor's degree from St. Louis University and a master's degree from the University of Virginia, where she met her husband, Bruce. They were married in 1972.

The Cowhigs moved to Kankakee in 1982, and Loretto joined the League of Women Voters of Kankakee County. She was a frequent moderator of candidate debates hosted by the League.

Until March 2021, Loretto was a community planner with AgeGuide (formerly the Northeastern Illinois Area Agency on Aging), a role she had held since 1984. In recent years, she had focused on Medicare counseling; she was a certified SHIP counselor who helped seniors and their families navigate the Medicare enrollment process.

Loretto was a skilled baker who for decades passed out homemade cookies to trick-or-treaters at the family's Riverview home. Friends anticipated St. Patrick's Day, because it meant Loretto's annual gift of Irish soda bread, usually still warm from the oven. Her final act of baking was a cake for an event at St. Patrick's Catholic Church, where she had been a parishioner for 39 years. She served there as a Eucharistic minister and lector and had served on the parish council.

Loretto was a voracious reader, often in the middle of several books at a time. She especially loved the works of Jane Austen and probably could have recited passages from *Pride & Prejudice* from memory.

Loretto was a frequent tour guide at the B. Harley Bradley House in Riverview, a restored Frank Lloyd Wright home. For many years she was a member and chair of the City of Kankakee Planning Board.

Survivors include her husband, Bruce Cowhig; sister, Marion Curtis (George) of Denver, CO; daughter, Marian Cowhig Owen (David) of Charlotte, NC; son, Neil Cowhig (Kelly) of Plymouth, WI; and grandchildren, William Owen, Cora Cowhig and Gus Cowhig.

She was preceded in death by her parents; sister, Virginia Schnarr; and brother, James Golden.

Visitation will be Friday from 4 to 8 p.m. at Clancy-Gernon-Hertz Funeral Home in Kankakee. A funeral Mass will be celebrated Saturday, October 9, at 10 a.m. at St. Patrick Catholic Church in Kankakee.

Memorials may be made to Wright in Kankakee or to her beloved alma mater, Nerinx Hall High School in Webster Groves, MO.

In honor of this quiet woman who worked hard and loved abundantly, the family asks that you register to vote and visit your local library.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

OCT **8**. 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Kankakee - Clancy-Gernon-Hertz Funeral Home  
1480 W. Court St.  
Kankakee, IL 60901  
(815) 932-1214  
cgfuneral@gmail.com

## Funeral Mass

OCT **9**. 10:00 AM (CT)

St. Patrick Catholic Church  
428 S. Indiana  
Kankakee, IL 60901  
(815) 932-6716

# Tribute Wall

AS

“ I was sorry to hear of Loretto's passing and remember her as a bright, clear, and energetic person. My thoughts are with the family during this difficult time.

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**Andrew Suprenant** - December 13, 2021 at 01:12 PM

WM

“ We are so saddened to hear of Loretto's death. It is like the Rolling Stones losing Charlie Watts, the core of the band is gone and the music will never be the same again. I worked with Loretto both as a peer and supervisor. My mind flashes to the smell of freshly baked goods in the office, biscotti Christmas party gifts and other reflections on her generosity. We still get our spices from Penzey's thanks to Loretto's suggestion so many years ago. As to her peers and the aging network in general, the loss is counted by the inestimable number of seniors and caregivers, fellow agency and grantee staff, board and advisory council members who benefitted from her expert knowledge of Medicare/Medicaid and other federal programs. Her link to these people was through individual one-to-one assistance, legislative advocacy, and through program design and implementation. Loretto was the ultimate professional, always dependable, supremely informed, caring, and well prepped. So Long Kankakee's Rose ...  
Walt Meyers and Gale Morgan-Williams

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**Walter Meyers** - October 12, 2021 at 09:10 AM

BC

*I hope somebody in heaven explains to Loretto who Charlie Watts was (maybe they'll meet?), but she'll get your point!*

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**Bruce Cowhig** - October 12, 2021 at 11:10 AM

KD

“ Dear Family of Loretto, I am grateful to have met Loretto when I was a young girl. Her uncle and two aunts lived next door to my family. Loretto was a wonderful role model for me, and I was delighted to be able to attend her beloved Nerinx Hall. I still remember the kind card and letter she sent me at the time of my wedding. I am keeping you all in my heart. -Kathy Roach Day

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**Kathleen Day** - October 10, 2021 at 12:55 PM

BC

Second only to her family, Loretto's time at Nerinx shaped who she became as an adult. She has so many stories and memories of the teachers there, and often shared those with me

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**Bruce Cowhig** - October 12, 2021 at 11:07 AM

CB

“ To the Cowhig family,

Loretto was greatly respected by those of us in League of Women Voters who were able to work beside her on our many projects and studies over the years. She was a great influence in our goal to engage the voters of Kankakee County with her moderator skills at our candidate forums.

We are so sorry to hear of her passing; she will be greatly missed.

Cindy Bade, member of the Kankakee County chapter, 1975 to 1988

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**Cindy Bade** - October 09, 2021 at 04:49 PM

MK

“ To the Cowhig Family and on behalf of the Staff/Board of Directors of the DuPage Senior Citizens Council, our deepest sympathy for your loss.

*I was fortunate to have met Loretto through my work at the DuPage Senior Citizens Council as a grantee of Northeastern Illinois Agency on Aging. For 20+ years I was able to interact with Loretto and came to know how special of an individual she was. Quiet, kind, observant, focused, and a little bit "sassy" when she wanted to be is how I will remember her as well as being one of the most intelligent people I have ever met. She will be missed but also fondly remembered by so many. I for one, was positively changed forever for having known her. Until we meet again....*

*Marylin Krolak, Executive Director - DuPage Senior Citizens Council*

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**Marylin Krolak** - October 08, 2021 at 02:55 PM

JS

“ Bruce and family, I have so many great memories of visiting my Golden cousins in my early years. Their home was a bastion of learning and love. World maps covered the kitchen. Academic achievement was so evident. It made such a great impression on me to see that academic excellence, hard work, and laughter could all be found together. After Uncle Jim's passing the family pulled together and continued their commitment to each other. Loved each and every one of them. My heart is saddened by Loretto's departure. But in the true Irish spirit, I say, go Lassie go. In heaven we can meet again.

*John T Sugrue*

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**John Sugrue** - October 07, 2021 at 04:52 PM

BC

*Thank you. Loretto had such an incredible memory for family stories, and shared many, many with me over the years. I will treasure them (as long as MY memory holds out!)*

**Bruce Cowhig** - October 12, 2021 at 11:04 AM

JG

“ *So sorry to hear about the passing of such a loving, giving person! My condolences to the family and hope that your pleasant memories of Loretto will help comfort you. ❤️*

**Janet Glidden** - October 07, 2021 at 03:38 PM

LJ

“ *There are no words adequate to express my sadness at the loss of my friend and co-worker for over 30 years! We literally came in the door at the Agency on Aging together. Loretto was my "late office buddy", as we both did our best work after 4:30 when most everyone else was gone. That was also the time we shared "grandparent stories", solved the political problems of the world, smiled about our children's achievements and, continually brainstormed about how we could better serve the aging population to which we had both dedicated our professional lives.*

*Even though my heart is heavy, I also smile and laugh at her memory! Loretto was fun and funny, creative and could be depended upon. I will miss her, but I know that even Heaven is better because she is there...baking bread, making fudge sauce, playing the piano, and watching over those she loved most- Bruce, Marion, Neil and especially her grand children!*

*Love, peace and strength to the family---- Lucia Jones*

**Lucia Jones** - October 07, 2021 at 01:47 PM

BC

*Lucia--Loretto regarded you so highly. At the agency, you were professional and, from what she told me, you created such a warm cooperative atmosphere in the agency. Also you weren't against having some fun in the agency, which I hope you are continuing. It was great to see you again last week--Bruce*

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**Bruce Cowhig** - October 12, 2021 at 11:02 AM

KS

“ *So sorry to hear of Loretto's passing. I worked with her through SHIP program - working on SHIP grants. She was a wonderful, dedicated person. She gave everything her all. Sending prayers to Bruce and the rest of her family as they grieve.*

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**Kathy Seketa** - October 07, 2021 at 01:43 PM

SH

“ *I was fortunate to know Loretto for a short time and had a few wonderful conversations with she and her husband, Bruce. I remember her kindness and her love for baking and was surprised when an Irish soda bread would magically appear on the porch. Mostly I remember her high spirits while she was ill and it seemed that she would live forever. Which she will in the hearts of those she touched.*

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**Susan Henke** - October 07, 2021 at 11:53 AM

LE

“ I am sure that Loretto is up in heaven in amazement at all of the lives she has impacted during her short time on this earth. I only had the priveldge of knowing her for three short years but during that time she inspired me to walk-daily-and that change has really changed my life so positively. In addition, her dedicated, quiet and selfless service to others, was an inspiring example of a life well lived. Thank you Loretto for sharing your gifts with all of us! You will trully be missed!

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**Leslie Edstrom** - October 07, 2021 at 09:06 AM

CK

“ I am sad to hear about Loretto's passing but glad to know that heaven has one awesome angel looking out and over her family, friends and community. Loretto was calm and steady at the Agency on Aging. She always was up-to-date on info, penned many songs and plays that brought smiles and laughter to staff, and provided us with lots of food goodies. Both her and Bruce were great workers at the Holiday Meals on Wheels Brunch year after year. I soooooo appreciated both of their energies, time and commitment. They could always be counted on!

With great thanks,  
Connie Kobitter

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**Connie Kobitter** - October 06, 2021 at 10:05 PM

BH

“ Bruce, Marian and Neil...so very sorry to learn of Loretto's passing. She was always very kind and I know will be missed by you all. You and your families have my sincere condolences. Bonnie (Mackin) Harpin

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**Bonnie Harpin** - October 06, 2021 at 06:15 PM

MM

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



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**Marilyn Mulcahy** - October 06, 2021 at 01:05 PM

MM

*I was thrilled when Loretto was named St. Patrick Parish Council of Catholic Women's WOMAN OF THE YEAR. She certainly modeled what it meant to live your faith "in the marketplace". Through her example she led others to do the same.*

*She will be missed so very much ...*

*Bruce, Marion, and Neal, my heart goes out to you.  
Marilyn Mulcahy*

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**Marilyn Mulcahy** - October 06, 2021 at 01:13 PM

DH

“ *Loretto enriched our lives but that's an understatement. So many memories! guiding us to be better advocates to our legislators; inspiring us to combat fraud for social security and Medicare/Medicaid; giving us countless yummy Loretto-baked goodies; making us laugh with her wry humor; wowing us with her eloquent writing and speaking skills; playing piano to accompany the unfortunate Agency Chorus grappling to sing a rousing rendition of a famous musical at an Agency Annual Meeting; and of course her famous Christmas fudge sauce gifts. My deepest condolences, Bruce and family. A Great Lady has been recalled to Heaven.  
Donna Copeland Hill*

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**Donna Copeland Hill** - October 06, 2021 at 12:42 PM

GK

“ I had the brief privilege of knowing Loretto during her last 2 years since I joined her at AgeGuide, the Area Agency on Aging, where she had dedicated her career to serving older adults. In the short time I knew her, she made quite a lasting impression on me. She was as strong and devoted an advocate as she was friend. She was always reading, always learning. Still, she made time to send touching, heartfelt personal notes that cheered and encouraged. When she retired, she left big shoes to fill and I feel so blessed to have known her.

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**Gretchen Knowlton** - October 06, 2021 at 10:52 AM

WG

“ My thoughts and prayers are with Loretto's family at this time. I have worked with Loretto for years with Age Guide. God bless!

Wendie Garlich  
Will County

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**Wendie Garlich** - October 06, 2021 at 10:52 AM

SG

“ It broke my heart to hear of the loss of "our Loretto" who i was blessed to have known while serving the Area Agency on Aging of NE IL as an advisory council and board member for 20 yrs. Loretto was one sweet, honest and very diplomatic woman who had to listen to me rant about the state of our country and government at every legislative committee meeting. She definitley had to be a saint!! What a loss to our senior services and SHIP community.. i hope Loretto is baking in the Bed and Breakfast up above!!

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**Susan Grossinger** - October 05, 2021 at 10:37 PM

CL

“ Loretto was a model for those of us who worked with her at the NEIL Area Agency on Aging! So much commitment to her work and such example and mentor for those who worked with her!

Cheryl McCoy Lockwood - October 05, 2021 at 08:31 PM

DL

“ My heart was broken when I got the email telling me of Loretto's passing. I worked closely with her for years via the SHIP program. The first word that comes to mind when I think of Loretto is "sweet". When she heard my coworker's wife was having a baby, she crocheted a blanket; anytime we had trainings at or near her location, she always baked goodies. She was just a kind-hearted person and I will truly miss her.

Dave Lecik

Illinois Department on Aging, SHIP Medicare Trainer

Dave Lecik - October 05, 2021 at 05:58 PM

BC

Loretto often commented to me how much she valued your skill and advice on SHIP matters--Bruce Cowhig, Loretto's husband

Bruce Cowhig - October 06, 2021 at 10:47 AM

BC

“ 3 files added to the album Memories Album



Bruce Cowhig - October 05, 2021 at 03:02 PM

SL

“ Rest in peace dear Loretto. The SHIP family is thankful for knowing and working alongside Loretto as she graciously gave over 12 years of service to the community giving Medicare counseling and performing Public Educational events. You will be missed my friend!  
Sandy Leith and the SHIP Staff, IL Dept. on Aging

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**sandy leith** - October 05, 2021 at 03:01 PM

BC

*Loretto enjoyed working with you and the SHIP staff*

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**Bruce Cowhig** - October 06, 2021 at 10:48 AM

LH

“ There are not enough words to express my sorrow at this loss. I am honored to have know this remarkable women who has been a beloved mentor and friend to me. She was my Medicare guru and our birthday cake maker. She was the hardest worker and most devoted friend. It is a great loss to our aging network and our community.

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**Lucinda Hurt** - October 05, 2021 at 01:38 PM

BC

*Loretto was glad to have you as a colleague*

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**Bruce Cowhig** - October 06, 2021 at 10:49 AM