



Marilyn Ann O'Flaherty

August 9, 1933 - March 3, 2016

Marilyn Ann (McFarland) O'Flaherty died peacefully at home on March 3, 2016. She was born August 9, 1933 in Kankakee to Edward and Marcella McFarland.

She attended Bradley schools and graduated from Eastern Illinois University with a degree in elementary education. She completed graduate work at NIU, ISU, College of St. Francis and Governor's State University.

She married her high school sweetheart, Gerald O'Flaherty in 1955. Together they had sons Jeffery, Mark, and daughter Heather.

She taught for 25 years, most of that time in the Bradley School district teaching fourth and fifth grade, she created and ran the interactive learning center at Bradley West and created and led the art curriculum for the same district.

After retiring from teaching in 1990 she started The Exploration Station...a children's museum. That embodied her love of teaching through exploration and discovery. With the help of many volunteers and the support of the Bourbonnais Township Park District she continued to grow the museum until her retirement in 1998.

After retirement she continued her community involvement with the Newspapers in education program at the Daily Journal. She was also very involved as the volunteer coordinator at The Salvation Army in Kankakee. She was a proud member of Delta Kappa Gamma, Women's club of Bourbonnais, the Minerva Club and several other organizations.

She was also very active in her church. She was a 70 year member of the Bradley Wesley United Methodist Church. She taught Sunday school, sang in the choir, served on many committees and edited the newsletter.

She enjoyed spending time with friends and family, travelling, playing bridge, and sharing her love of learning.

She is survived by sons, Jeffery (Georgia) O'Flaherty of Keller, TX; Mark (Jill) O'Flaherty of Bloomington, IL; daughter, Heather (Bill Garver) O'Flaherty of DeKalb, IL. Grandchildren, Sean (Erin) O'Flaherty of Denver, CO; Lauren (Bryan) Benton of Ft. Worth, TX, Seth O'Flaherty of Ames, IA and Spencer O'Flaherty of Bloomington, IL, and three great-grandchildren. She's also survived by three nieces, one nephew and their families and her brother-in-law Gerald Frechette.

She was preceded in death by her parents, her husband Jerry, and her sister Janice Frechette.

Memorial Visitation will be held 5:00 -8:00 p.m. on Monday, March 7, 2016 at Clancy-Gernon Funeral Home, Bourbonnais.

Memorial Service will be 11:00 a.m. Tuesday, March 8, 2016 at Wesley United Methodist Church in Bradley. Rev. Julie Smith will officiate the service.

A memorial has been established in her name for the Exploration Station.

Previous Events

Memorial Visitation

MAR 7. 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Bourbonnais - Clancy-Gernon Funeral Homes, Inc.
295 Main St., NW
Bourbonnais, IL 60914
(815) 932-1214
cgfuneral@gmail.com

Memorial Service

MAR 8. 11:00 AM (CT)

Wesley United Methodist Church
500 N. Cleveland
Bradley, IL 60915
(815) 933-7932
<http://www.bradleywesley.org/>

Tribute Wall

MM

“ *Mary McNutt lit a candle in memory of Marilyn Ann O'Flaherty*



Mary McNutt - April 02, 2022 at 06:05 PM

EB

“ *The life well lived. Marilyn was an inspiration to all of us. She was loved and will be missed.*
Eva Balga

Eva Balga - March 11, 2016 at 09:14 AM


MC

“ *Mark and Jill,*

We are so sorry for your loss. Our hearts and prayers are with you and in memorial, we have forwarded a small donation to Exploration Station on Marilyn's behalf as a tribute to the legacy she leaves to others to enjoy and learn.

The PEMs - Kris, John, Carrie, Peggie, Deblyn and Matthew

matthew cole - March 10, 2016 at 11:55 AM

 Betsy Carnahan

“ *Trixy and family, I am sorry to hear of the loss of Marilyn. May she rest in peace. Thinking of you, Trix. Love you.*

Betsy Carnahan - March 10, 2016 at 09:22 AM

JT

“ Heather and family, So sorry to hear of the passing of your mother. A great woman who always took the time to stop and talk with me and our family. Always interesting in how we were doing. A great and loving person and a loss to the community. Peace and blessings, Joey & Lana Tietjens

Joey & Lana Tietjens - March 08, 2016 at 03:10 PM

TC

“ Mark my prayers are with you in this difficult time. May the Lord give you and your family peace knowing she is now in heaven with him. Remember all the wonderful times you had with her while she was here on earth. Tammy Carlson

Tammy Carlson - March 08, 2016 at 12:54 PM

RH

“ Marilyn was one of the most interesting, creative, lovely women we have known; and we share the grief of her family at her death. We thank God for the witness to daily Christian living she has lived out - in her personal and professional life, in her care of her beloved Jerry in his final illness, and in her participation in the life of Wesley UMC, Bradley. Rest in peace, Marilyn. Thank you, Jesus.
Rev. Stan Haxton
Rev. Mary Louise Haxton

Rev. Stanley Haxton - March 08, 2016 at 09:50 AM

MM

“*Mrs. O’Flaherty was one of my teachers for 5th grade at Bradley West. I remember how she encouraged my love of reading, and was always positive and encouraging. She went above and beyond to know each of us personally and to match our needs with innovative materials. She is one of the women who shaped my decision to become a teacher. Her kind spirit and desire to share her love of learning will never be forgotten. My sincere sympathy to the O’Flaherty Family.*

*Missy Meredith Magda
Lawrenceville, GA*

Missy Magda - March 08, 2016 at 06:21 AM

VT

“ Mrs.O'Flaherty came into my hospital room when I was 9. I was hit by a Pepsi Cola truck. She was going to be my 4 grade teacher in the coming school year. I believe Chip (her son) was across the hall after having his tonsils taken out. She would keep my mother company while their boys were recouping. She was always a pleasure to talk to and learn from. When I finally was able to go to class, she always went out of the way to help me learn, coming to our house to give me my daily lessons and help me learn easy methods of spelling. Till this day when I need to write down together, the memory of her steps in to say "Sound it out" To Get Her. There's not many teachers that take time with kids back then, but she did, and wonderful memories still fill my head of her compassion on helping me learn to spell and her willingness to make all the students to Want to learn more. She will forever have a place in my heart as the only teacher who took the extra time to get me caught up on the lessons I was behind on, and placed in me the desire to want to learn more.. I even remember she lived on south Forest ave. on 1 May day I got a basket and filled them with dandelions knocked on the door and ran away. She opened the door saw the basket and softly said Thank-You. All I was trying to do was to thank her. You will be missed by so many! Until I see you again with our Lord You will be missed.

Vance Trombley

Vance Trombley - March 07, 2016 at 11:33 PM

CM

“ Marilyn was an inspiration to all who knew her. She will be missed. Our sympathies to her family.

Rich and Cindy McBarnes

Cindy McBarnes - March 07, 2016 at 10:28 PM

PF

“ I taught with Marilyn at Bradley West. In fact my 3rd grade classroom was right next door to her art room. She was an amazing person! Always upbeat and positive! I don't think I've ever known a person who was so talented in so many ways. She will be missed.
Peggy Fehland

Peggy Fehland - March 07, 2016 at 10:21 PM

RD

“ Mrs. O'Flaherty was my fifth grade teacher. She is one of the few teachers that I can remember. I've had the pleasure seeing her throughout the years, she always remembered me and my mom. Many life's have been blessed by her care for children and the homeless. She will be missed by many.

Robin Norton Devereaux - March 07, 2016 at 06:04 PM

JG

“ I loved Marilyn! She was one of our Gretchen Charlton Art Gallery dear friends and board members. Marilyn was a generous and giving soul. She especially loved our Annual Youth Art Exhibition and worked tirelessly on it every year. We will be greatly missed!

Jan Glazar - March 07, 2016 at 11:05 AM

KR

“ I taught with Marilyn at Bradley West Elementary School from 1986 until her retirement in 1990. She had a very positive outlook and a wonderful smile. You are in my thoughts and prayers.

*Karen Riml
Brunswick, Maine*

Karen Riml - March 06, 2016 at 07:13 PM

JB

“ Your parents contributed to everyone. I enjoyed volunteering for her at school and the museum. I will miss her. My sympathy to the family.

Peace and prayers,
Jackie Blair

Jackie Blair - March 06, 2016 at 02:04 PM

RW

“ With our deepest sympathy. Rita (Hunter) and Jerry Williams

Rita Williams - March 06, 2016 at 01:32 PM

AW

“ I have fond memories of Mrs. O as a teacher and as a volunteer in the early days of the exploration station! I am lucky to have had her mentorship as a young person. Sympathy to all of her family. Amy Wiley

amy wiley - March 05, 2016 at 07:54 PM



“ 32 files added to the album Life Tributes



Clancy-Gernon Funeral Homes - March 05, 2016 at 11:56 AM

JL

“ So sorry to hear the passing of Marilyn. She was a Part of our Pierson family along with Jerry. They were my godparents. Jerry was also my teacher in high school. Marilyn was one of the sweetest women I knew. Heaven is getting a wonderful woman. My deepest sympathies to the family from the entire Charles Pierson family.

Julie Pierson Leary - March 05, 2016 at 10:38 AM

AP

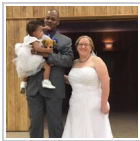
“ I always looked forward to art class with Mrs. O'Flaherty as my teacher! I loved puppet club and I loved seeing her occasionally at The Exploration Station. Such a wonderful person. She was always pleasant and very uplifting to all of us in our formative years. Such a light.

Angela P. - March 05, 2016 at 08:55 AM

DA

“ I remember doing Puppet club in school and her as the teacher. We did the Beatles. She will be forever missed. Rest in Peace Mrs. O.....

Dawn - March 05, 2016 at 07:24 AM



“ I remember when the expiration station opened and my sister and I went along with a friend. There was face paint so my sister and friend painted my face and scared Mrs. O. But then was laughing and wanted to take my picture to hang up. She will be Missed by so many, rest in peace. Teach my son everything you taught me. I know he will have a great Teacher up in Heaven.



Sharon Dayhoff - March 05, 2016 at 06:45 AM

IC

“ *What a dedicated person she was! I had known her since she was in High school and loved her mother too! She will be missed!* ”

Ione Chappell - March 04, 2016 at 12:16 PM