



## Mary Elizabeth Brown

August 7, 1920 - February 10, 2016

Mary Elizabeth Schwarz Brown (aka Molly and Bee) died February 10, 2016 with hospice care in her home surrounded by family. She was born to Loretta and Joseph Schwarz in Covington, Kentucky on August 7, 1920. Her family relocated to Peoria, Illinois where Mary tagged along with her big brothers Bob and Jack, sledding, hopping streetcars, playing tennis, and skating. Mary attended Peoria Catholic schools and relished her high school years at the Academy of Our Lady where she played tennis and was forward on the basketball team -- no small feat for her small stature. Mary starred in the senior class play, *Peg of My Heart*. She fondly recalled that her high school sweetheart and future husband, John "Jack" F. Brown, Jr., attended every performance but nuns moved him to the back of the auditorium because he was a distraction.

Mary married Jack in 1941, six months before Pearl Harbor. While Jack served in the war, Mary and her three infants (twin daughters and only son) under the age of 13 months lived with her parents in Peoria. After the war, Mary and Jack moved to Ottawa, Illinois, and added two more daughters to their family. In 1951 Kankakee became home where their last two daughters were born. As founding members of St. Martin of Tours Catholic Church, they helped grow a tight knit church community. Mary became an active volunteer in the Council of Catholic Women and the Red Cross while shepherding seven children through St. Martin of Tours elementary school and St. Pat's/Bishop

McNamara High School. Mary and Jack regularly hosted bridge and dinner parties and their home became the hangout for many of the kids' friends.

Mary's lifelong love for sports started by playing in tennis tournaments with her husband and her brothers; she then taught her seven children the nuances of the game. Count-less days were spent on Peoria public tennis courts; Mary amazed us with stories of rolled clay courts and a timekeeper complete in white uniform. Later, she added bowling and golf to her repertoire. She never missed a Tuesday Women's Golf Day at the Kankakee Country Club and she and Jack spent most summer Fridays golfing and din-ing with friends at the Club. Mary and Jack travelled the U.S. and occasionally abroad to play golf at master level courses. She played golf into her early eighties. She was also a highly competitive Scrabble and Bridge player playing both until a few days before her death.

In 1979 Mary and Jack retired to Hot Springs Village, Arkansas, a golfer's and garden-er's paradise before permanently returning to Kankakee in 2001 to be closer to their family.

Mary's husband, Jack preceded her in death on January 23, 2008.

Mary Elizabeth Schwarz Brown's family include: Vikki and son-in-law Sheldon Proctor of Evanston; Pat and son-in-law Phil Aldred (deceased 2015) of Nipoma, California; Jim Brown (deceased 2010) of Kankakee; Suzy and son-in-law Jim Ruder (deceased 2012) of Kankakee; Mary and son-in-law Tom Rogers of Knoxville, Tennessee; Sheila Brown of Kankakee; and Liz Brown of Chicago. Grandchildren and great grandchildren: Chad Proctor (Danika Murray) and Justin; Gareth (Valerie) Proctor and Elli and Olivia; Laura Proctor (Matt Brejcha), Kari McGinnis Borden (Wes) and Jeremy Beitch; Kendra (Bob) Farber and Brady, Caden and Kylee; Marc (Becca) Brown and Ben, Luke, Matthew, Jane, and Una; Matt (Jennelle) Ruder and Davis, Lauren and

Michael; Chris (Shaw) Ruder and Beckett, Elliot, and Hattie; Megan (Mike) Roche and Jack, Margaret and Dennis; Nathan (Anne) Rogers and Virginia; and Ben Rogers. Many nieces and neph-ews and special friend, Clare Donovan.

The unsinkable Mary “Molly” Brown lived a good, long life and will be missed dearly.

Visitation will be held Saturday, April 2, 2016 from 9:00 to 10:45 AM at Clancy-Gernon Funeral Home in Kankakee followed by the funeral Mass at St. Martin of Tours at 11:00 AM. A luncheon will follow. Mary’s cremains will be interred on April 4 in St. Joseph Cemetery in Peoria. In lieu of flowers, Mary asked that donations be made to St. Martin of Tours Catholic Church and Salvation Army of Kankakee.

# Previous Events

## Memorial Visitation

APR 2. 9:00 AM - 10:45 AM (CT)

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

## Memorial Mass

APR 2. 11:00 AM (CT)

St. Martin of Tours Catholic Church  
953 S. 9th Avenue  
Kankakee, IL 60901  
(815) 933-7177

# Tribute Wall

EH

“ I am so very sorry I was unable to be with you today. I wanted to say good bye to one who was a Bridge partner and an opponent -- at all times one with whom I always enjoyed playing. My condolences to all. Elaine Holtzman

Elaine Holtzman - April 02, 2016 at 05:17 PM

ML

“ Mary was a very special person to me. Her warmth, love, glowing smile and laugh will always remain with me. My deepest sympathy to all her family. What a blessing to have known Mary.

maureen (Webster) Lawrence - April 02, 2016 at 06:57 AM



“ 109 files added to the album LifeTributes



Clancy-Gernon Funeral Homes - March 30, 2016 at 08:08 AM

SH

“ Our love to your family. Mary was such a big part of our golf club community. My grandparents, Sally & Ray Benoit loved their days on the course with Mary & Jack.  
Mom remains so partial, to 'dear Mary' and I cherish to this day the sweet encouragement she offered a little girl learning the game of golf!  
Sending prayers and warm thoughts to her entire family,  
Phyllis Benoit Hendron and Sally Rae Hendron

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**Sally Rae Hendron** - February 24, 2016 at 07:56 PM

BB

“ So sorry for your loss, she was a beautiful lady. Many fond memories of the Brown Family, you are all in my prayers.

*Bruce Blake*



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**Bruce Blake** - February 23, 2016 at 03:11 PM

CM

“ Deepest sympathy to Vicki & Patty.  
Remember your Mom fondly when we attended St. Pat's. Prayers for you and your families.

*Cathie (Sederstrand) Miedema*



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**Cathie (Sederstrand) Miedema** - February 20, 2016 at 11:48 AM

CP

“ Aahh, my fondest memory is listening on Friday evenings to the banter at the bridge table. The peals of distinctive laughter (especially Mary's and Dick Ackman) kept me awake but longing to be a grown up as surrounded by boisterous friends as my parents.  
Connie Norgaard Pries

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**Constance Norgaard Pries** - February 18, 2016 at 11:00 AM

CD

“ Bee was like a mother to me. I am so grateful to have had her in my life. With love, Clare

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**Clare Donovan** - February 15, 2016 at 07:55 AM

FS

“ Thanks Molly, for welcoming me to your crazy family. It was so much fun & wonderful for this only child. It was my second family. Enjoy breaking par up there.  
Love, Wop

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**Frank Sbertoli** - February 14, 2016 at 03:13 PM

SI

“ Sister Inge lit a candle in memory of Mary Elizabeth Brown



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**Sister Inge** - February 14, 2016 at 02:45 PM

DJ

“ So sorry for your loss Susie. I r member your mom well and she did such a wonderful job of raising all your sisters and brother. May she rest in peace. from Darwin



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**Darwin Jaenicke** - February 12, 2016 at 06:04 PM