



Maureen Rose McNamara

February 11, 1927 - January 2, 2023

Maureen Rose Kiernan McNamara passed away peacefully on Monday, January 2, 2023, with her four daughters by her side.

“Molly” was born in Stratford, Connecticut, on February 11, 1927, to Conleth Edward Kiernan and Ella Edmondson Unwin. She had four siblings, Eileen, John, Judith, and Robert, making her the classic middle child.

She married William McNamara, then enlisted in the U.S. Navy, in Naugatuck CT in June 1947. She and William had five children: Kevin, Deborah, Bridget, Erin, and Tara. She had two sons-in-law, Glenn Glakas and Gary Hall, who affectionately called her Sarge. Molly took the greatest pride in her five grandchildren: Christopher, Kristi (Andrew), Matthew (Amanda), Brandon (Kyle), and Spencer (Shelby). Her nine great-grandchildren believe she held the moon, and not just because she was as tiny as they are. Madison, Frazier, Mason, James, Scarlett, Austen, Sawyer; and Rose and Kiernan, who are named after her. She is also survived by numerous beloved nieces and nephews: Mary Ella, John David, Kimberly, Michael, Christopher, John, James, Jay, Scott, and Stacie; and many grand nieces and nephews.

In defiance of her father, who told her she could never be a nurse, Molly graduated from the New Britain General Hospital School of Nursing in 1948. Hoping to become a Navy nurse, she joined the United States Nurse Corps in

1945, but the war ended before she graduated, and she instead went into private sector nursing. She took on many specialties over her 66-year career, including trauma, obstetrics, surgery, and private practice. A natural leader, she served for many years as Director of Nursing at Miles Memorial Hospital in Damariscotta, Maine. After her first stab at retirement, leaving nursing to open a ceramics studio, she went on to become a Clinical Director for Kaiser Permanente's MidAtlantic Region.

Though she was bantam-sized, Molly had a reputation throughout her career for standing up to male physicians, wearing pants before women were allowed, and skillfully commanding hospital units. She kept that strong, quietly determined, stubborn, yet serene spirit throughout her life as a nurse, a friend, and the matriarch of her family. To the surprise of no one, she worked at Kaiser Permanente until she was 87 years old.

As an officer's wife (itself a full-time job), she moved her large family across the continent, living in Connecticut, Rhode Island, California, Maryland, Washington, D.C., Virginia, Maine, and Newfoundland—often left to raise her children on her own while her husband was serving overseas. Never a typical housewife-and-mother of the era (never a “typical” anything), she coached her children's basketball and cheerleading teams and led their scout troops while working full-time, instilling in her children resilience, independence and a strong work ethic.

For many years, her retirement home in Lake Gaston, North Carolina, was her extended family's home base. She traveled along for all of her family's adventures, including a “homegoing” trip to Ireland in 2013. She was a master-level knitter and loved to crochet, paint, craft, build, and bake. Grandchildren's birthday cakes were always finished; knitting projects rarely, as she was never satisfied with her work. She thought like an engineer; she loved innovative contraptions, and we called her Inspector Gadget. She was

also called Scoop because of the funny way she pronounced “ice cream scoop” in her gentle, grandmotherly voice. She always had a twinkle in her eye. She wore Airwalks and Air Jordans “because they’re comfortable.” She was more fanatical about Nintendo than her grandsons, and particularly loved The Legend of Zelda. She loved to ask us all, “what is your five-year plan?”

She was ahead of her time and accomplished, but what made Molly so special was her inimitable character. She was, and will remain, the rock of her large family. She was at once gentle and stern, mischievous and empathetic, strong and soft. She had a way of unfailingly making everyone feel deeply loved, even when you were on the receiving end of one of her simple, direct, short, admonishments. She guided us all from afar, and still does.

Her family will host a Celebration of Life in the coming months. Those wishing to honor her are encouraged to make a donation to the American Nurses Foundation.

Tribute Wall

MF

“ Molly packed a whole lot of the good stuff into her tiny frame. She was a lovely lady who had a joyful smile and a quick wit. Our condolences to to the entire family in their time of grief. Tim and Michelle Field.

Michelle Field - February 08, 2023 at 01:59 AM

BH

“ Bridget Hall lit a candle in memory of Maureen Rose McNamara



bridget hall - February 04, 2023 at 12:19 PM

EM

“ 13 files added to the album Photos of Molly



Erin McNamara - January 07, 2023 at 01:25 PM