



Mary Ricci Obermeier

January 19, 2025

Mary Ricci Obermeier died peacefully on Sunday, January 19, 2025, in Venice, FL. She was 89. Her family members were at her bedside during her final days in the hospital and hospice, as was Mary's eternal sense of humor.

While Mary spent most of her career in hospitals, she was not born in one. After three days' labor, which her mother often reminded her of, Mary was born at home in the small town of Osawatomie, Kansas, during the depression, in December 1935. Mary's parents, Giuseppe & Anna (Protomanni) Ricci, had emigrated years apart from Pisterzo, Italy, and they made Mary Josephine a first-generation American.

Ursuline nuns at St. Philip Neri Catholic Grade School educated Mary, who attended two classes: Grades 1-6, and Grades 7-8. She then graduated Osawatomie High School in 1953. Her children were surprised to learn that her senior superlative was "Most Athletic."

In 1950, when she was only 14, the intrepid Mary drove her parents to Canada (before interstate highways) in her dad's '35 Dodge. While visiting family, a cousin - who was a nurse - recognized Mary's stomachache as a ruptured appendix, which required emergency surgery in Canada. This life-saving measure may have inspired her to pursue a career as a registered nurse. In 1957, she graduated St. Mary's Hospital School of Nursing, in

Kansas City, Missouri, where her classmates nicknamed her “Smirk.”

That same year, Mary married Everett Obermeier. The couple had three sons. In 1964, the family moved to Olathe, Kansas. Mary left Osawatomie State Hospital to work at Shawnee Mission Medical Center (SMMC) in Merriam, Kansas. In May 1972, Head Nurse Mary was named SMMC’s Employee of the Year. She was a skilled worker with deep empathy for patients and an irrepressible sense of humor.

In July 1972, Mary drove her children to start a new life in Venice, Florida. There, Mary worked as a floor nurse at Venice Hospital; she also took a second job at Venice Nursing Home South to pay for her children’s education at Epiphany Catholic School and Cardinal Mooney High School.

In 1980, Mary and two other nurses invested in a shrimp boat. This enterprise was hatched over beer and cigarettes at Mary’s, where co-workers often congregated after their 7-3 shift. They hired a captain of questionable competence, and spent one stormy night adrift in the Gulf of Mexico until the Coast Guard rescued them. After Mary’s get-rich-quick scheme as a shrimp boat co-owner literally sank, she continued working full time until 2000, spending time in oncology, geriatrics, medical-surgical units, intensive care, and obstetrics. Throughout it all, Mary never lost her compassion nor her gift for caregiving.

Mary had a generous spirit, especially at Christmas. She opened her home to those in need, both human and canine. Mary enjoyed hosting Christmas Eve parties, cooking enormous meals for her family, a well-played game of cards, a good scotch, the game shows of the 1970s, Gunsmoke, and outings with her grandchildren.

She had a life-long devotion to St. Jude, the patron saint of impossible

causes. She generally cheered for the underdog, except when it came to her life-long love of the Yankees. She also loved sarcastic repartee and insult humor. But Mary's bullet-proof exterior concealed a deep wellspring of love, and she could be moved to tears by anything from a grandchild's wedding, to the strains of "Pomp & Circumstance," to her lifelong favorite movie, *Gone With the Wind*. She was an independent, self-proclaimed "tough old bird." But let the record show Mary did things "My Way."

Mary was preceded in death by her parents, Joe and Anna Ricci, and her brother, Joseph Ulderico Ricci. She is survived by her three sons and daughters-in-law: Steven Jude (Lisa), of Olathe, Kansas, Thomas (Kindra), of Venice, FL, and Andrew (Bernadette), of Venice, FL; eight grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren. "Auntie M." also leaves three nephews and a niece. We will miss her dearly.

She also leaves her beloved Scarlet, a Jack Russell Terrier, and she thanks her long-time neighbors, Rich & Bonnie Nielsen, for adopting her.

Mary's funeral mass will be celebrated at 10:00 AM on Saturday, February 15, 2025, at Epiphany Cathedral's Parish Center, 317 Sarasota Street, Venice Florida.

"Mary requested no visitation and no flowers. In lieu of flowers please consider a donation to St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital, 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105."

"Mary requested no visitation. For online condolences and a full obituary, please visit <https://www.toalebrothers.com/>"

Previous Events

Funeral Mass

FEB **15**. 10:00 AM (ET)

Epiphany Cathedral Catholic Church
317 Sarasota Street, Venice Florida.
Venice, FL 34285

Tribute Wall

MO

“ I thought it would be best to type out some of my thoughts about Grandma since I appear to have inherited her gift of incredible handwriting. And I know that by writing this, somewhere in heaven Grandma is shaking her head knowing that people are talking about her, but when you leave so much of an impact on so many people the word is bound to get out somehow. Grandma’s sense of humor, knowledge of classic movies and television shows, and love of sports was unmatched (even though her choice of baseball teams was something to be desired). Your love of New York sports it also unmatched with the Yankees and Giants despite you not being from New York nor ever having visited New York. I can remember countless nights of watching TCM together and laughing over old black and white silent films like “The Coward,” and having a laugh at the over the top facial expressions of the actors. Often times, no matter what the movie, Grandma would be able to name at least several of the actors and actresses in it and would often times come very close to naming the exact year it came out. I have many warm memories visiting her house (keeping the house temperature near 77 degrees most times of the year has that effect). For many years, I remember waking up in the back bedroom of her home and going in to the kitchen only to discover Grandma had cooked more breakfast sausages, hash browns, and eggs than one person could eat. One of my favorite memories was having breakfast at her house when she accidentally tried to warm the pancake syrup up by thirty minutes instead of thirty seconds. Somewhere an amazing picture of the result of this attempt exists, but we are still trying to find it. She was also never one to say no to a game of cards, Yahtzee, and later in life Five Crowns. Grandma tried many times to describe the rules of bridge to us, but every time it just didn’t click.

Grandma was also unmatched in other areas too, namely in her love for her family, but especially her grandchildren. She would always give us way too much money every single birthday without fail. She was also unmatched in her faith. Many mornings I would remember waking up to find her reading her daily missal and prayer cards while sitting in her favorite arm chair often times with a Jack

Russell terrier curled up on her lap. The one area she never had faith in, however, was aviation. This, however, led to a favorite memory of mine where I drove Grandma from Florida to Kansas and back in her navy blue car which I quickly found out did not have cruise control. This trip was split up into several days, leading Grandma and I to have the greasiest green beans I have ever eaten as well as some very sub-par Italian food in Monteagle, TN (which Grandma for years would always and for whatever reason refer to as Eagle Rock).

There are too many memories of this amazing woman that will always live in my heart. I miss you tremendously Grandma. I miss your honest advice, your humorous and insightful stories, and for your constant reminders to me to stop worrying so much and to live life to the fullest. You always seemed to know exactly what to say and when to say it to make me feel better. There will never be another like you. Your family, friends, and dog miss you so much. I also look forward to our next visit together.

*Love,
Matthew*

Matthew Obermeier - February 11, 2025 at 06:07 PM

SW

“ That shrimp boat story is the best thing I've ever heard! I would expect nothing less from the woman who raised our Andy Obermeier. Andy, all our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family/loved ones. I'm so sorry for your loss.

Stephanie Winesett - February 03, 2025 at 01:22 PM

BN

“ Our deepest condolences to the entire Obermier family. Our dear Neighbor Mary was one of the kind. She was a die hard New York fan, and love to talk about stories in New York to my husband, and I as we were originally from New York,She had a wonderful sense of humor and will be dearly dearly missed. It is our honor to adopt llittle Scarlet and we will love her as much as Mary did. Rest in peace, our dear friend.

Bonnie Nielsen - February 03, 2025 at 07:08 AM

JM

“ The McElhaney family was so blessed to have Grandma Mary travel from Venice, Florida to Kansas City to be present at her Grandson Michael's wedding to our daughter, Sara on October 8, 2011. After hearing so many wonderful things about Grandma Mary from the Obermeiers we felt very blessed that she came to Michael and Saras wedding and very delighted to finally meet her. Our  hearts go out to the Obermeier family as she was very much loved by them and all that she served and who knew her. Her memory will always be remembered in our hearts. Jan and Phil McElhaney

Jan McElhaney - February 02, 2025 at 10:19 PM

LO

“ She was a wonderful human being. Truly, there was no one like her. May her memory be a blessing to all who knew her.

Lisa Obermeier - February 02, 2025 at 10:03 PM