



Mary Farrell Hillenmeyer

August 28, 1929 - August 4, 2023

Beloved mother, grandmother and great-grandmother Mary Farrell Hillenmeyer died Friday, August 4, 2023, at St. Margaret Hall, a faith-filled senior residence in Cincinnati, OH, where she spent the final two years of a life infused with commitment to God, her family and community. She was just shy of her 94th birthday.

Honored in 1983 as her adopted Kentucky hometown of Maysville's "Lady of the Year," Mrs. Hillenmeyer treasured her marriage, family, faith and community among her greatest blessings.

A native of Ludlow, KY, Mary Agnes Katherine Farrell was born August 28, 1929, to Edward C. Farrell, Sr., and Carrie Lou Fizzell Farrell, the youngest of their six children. She attended St. James Catholic School in Ludlow before graduating with honors in 1947 from La Salette Academy in neighboring Covington and received her bachelor's degree from the College of Mount St. Joseph in Cincinnati in 1951.

For her first five years as a professional, Ms. Farrell worked in clerical support for the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Cincinnati branch. Thirty years later, when coaching a daughter about job interviewing skills, she recalled the answer she gave an FBI recruiter about her long-range goals: "To know, love, and serve the Lord and to spend eternity with God in heaven," she said, citing

her Baltimore Catechism. Her actions humbly reflected those deepest desires.

Employing her gifts for language and journalism, Ms. Farrell served as assistant public relations director for Villa Madonna College (now Thomas More University) from 1956 to 1961. There she met her future husband, Ernest B. Hillenmeyer, Jr., who chaired the college's Board of Overseers, through mutual friend and Villa Madonna president Monsignor John ("Jack") F. Murphy. Fr. Jack celebrated Mary and Ernie's Nuptial Mass on October 14, 1961, at St. James Church in Ludlow.

Through marriage, Mrs. Hillenmeyer became a second mother to the Hillenmeyers' four children following the death in 1960 of Ernie's first wife, Ellen Parker Hillenmeyer. Zoe, Theresa, Ernie III and Cece soon welcomed "three little ones," siblings Ellen (1962), Katy (1964) and Paul (1966).

With her husband, Mrs. Hillenmeyer led the Christian Family Movement in Mason County, KY, from 1964 to 1969, while also volunteering as a 4-H and Scouting leader and presiding over St. Patrick School's Parent-Teacher Association. She was named 4-H Leader of the Year in 1981 after 16 years teaching cooking and sewing, a talent shared with her school-teacher mother.

Mrs. and Mr. Hillenmeyer were the first couple to chair Maysville's Interfaith Council, beginning in 1970. She expressed her faith in every facet of life, from protesting a segregated Northern Kentucky movie theater during her young adulthood to leading Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) classes for St. Patrick Church. She edited the church's newsletter, taught religion at St. Patrick High School, was elected president of St. Pat's parish council, and accompanied her husband to a gathering of permanent deacons hosted by Pope John Paul II in Detroit in 1987. During Deacon Hillenmeyer's years of service to the parishes of St. Patrick and St. James in Brooksville, KY, Mrs. Hillenmeyer ministered alongside him after being one of few spouses to

complete the same theological training he undertook for his 1985 ordination.

Compassion for vulnerable seniors motivated her outreach through the Mason County Commission on Aging, Meals on Wheels, and the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP).

Mrs. Hillenmeyer's joy for living pervaded her gracious hospitality to family, friends and international guests who frequented her home during tobacco season. Mary often traveled abroad with Ernie, visiting Japan, Brazil, Honduras, Europe and the Middle East. She actively participated in the Friendship Homemakers club and loved singing, her Irish heritage, Gin Rummy and Reds baseball. With a keen eye for handsome athletes, she favored Joey Votto among present-day Reds.

Hallmark could produce a line of greeting cards featuring her oft-quoted Momisms: "Make your own sunshine," "be good to yourself," "bloom where you're planted," "go with God," and "watch those crazy drivers" are just a few.

She inherited her father's ready smile and embodied kindness and optimism. Her light shall remain vibrantly alive in our hearts. Thank you, Mom/Grandma Mary/Great-grandma!

Along with her parents and husband, Mrs. Hillenmeyer was preceded in death by son Ernest B. Hillenmeyer, III, and her siblings Edward C. Farrell, Jr.; Margaret Farrell Ryan; William J., Robert E., and John P. Farrell and her sisters-in-law Rachel Hood Farrell (William), Eleanor H. Reichel (Herbert) and Mary H. Fiore (Tony).

She is survived by children and their families Zoe H. Gillespie (Joe) of Denver, CO; Theresa H. Mattei (Michael) of Louisville, KY; Beth Hoovler Hillenmeyer

of Richmond, IN; Cecelia H. Denegre (Joseph) of Philadelphia, PA; Ellen Hillenmeyer (Mark Wesling) of Cincinnati, OH; Kathleen Hillenmeyer of Santa Rosa, CA; and Paul Hillenmeyer (Laura McNeill) of Louisville. She also leaves 11 grandchildren: Elizabeth (Gillespie) Cadiz; Nicholas Mattei; Sara Hillenmeyer; Eric Mattei; Zoe Hillenmeyer; Andrew Denegre; Ellen (Gillespie) Fierle; Daniel Hillenmeyer; Luca Denegre; Stephen Hillenmeyer; and Luke von Brauchitsch, plus their spouses, her great-grandchildren, and beloved nieces and nephews.

An 11 a.m. Mass of Resurrection will be celebrated Friday, August 18, 2023, at St. Patrick Church in Maysville, preceded Thursday, August 17, 2023, by visitation from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. in the church. Friends also may visit one hour before Friday's funeral Mass. Following the committal rite at St. Patrick Cemetery, friends and family are invited to gather at the Knights of Columbus, 210 E. Third St., Maysville. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to St. Patrick Church, 110 E. Third St., Maysville, KY, 41056.

The Hillenmeyer family thanks all the people of Maysville/Aberdeen who stayed in touch with Mom and prayed for her, along with her newfound friends at St. Margaret Hall in Cincinnati.

Cemetery Details

St. Patrick Cemetery

Maysville, KY 41056

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG 17. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

St. Patrick Church
110 E. Third Street
Maysville, KY 41056

Visitation

AUG 18. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Patrick Church
110 E. Third Street
Maysville, KY 41056

Mass of Resurrection

AUG 18. 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Patrick Church
110 E. Third Street
Maysville, KY 41056

Tribute Wall

RW

“ Randy W. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mary Farrell Hillenmeyer.

Randy W. - August 18, 2023 at 08:48 PM

CK

“ I was saddened to hear about your Mother's recent passing. She was such a beautiful person both inside and out. I know this is a sad time for all of you.
Your family's many kindnesses over the years have meant so much to me. The entire family will be in my thoughts & prayers.

Love you all,

Chris (Jutzo) Krumdieck

Chris Krumdieck - August 17, 2023 at 10:04 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Mary Farrell Hillenmeyer.



August 15, 2023 at 12:47 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Mary Farrell Hillenmeyer.

August 14, 2023 at 11:51 AM



“ *Serene Reflections Bouquet was purchased for the family of Mary Farrell Hillenmeyer.*



August 14, 2023 at 11:51 AM



“ *Gus Cunningham planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mary Farrell Hillenmeyer.*

Gus Cunningham - August 09, 2023 at 11:51 PM



“ *"In loving Memory" 30" Medallion Chime was purchased for the family of Mary Farrell Hillenmeyer.*



August 08, 2023 at 10:19 AM



“ *Dear Friends,*

So sorry for your loss.

In Christian Sympathy,

Mike, Aprile, Will, and Brice

A R - August 07, 2023 at 10:34 PM



Thanks for your kind message! We appreciate your care and concern.

Mary Woodhead Hillenmeyer - August 31, 2023 at 03:41 PM