



Anne M Gaffney

October 18, 1925 - May 30, 2018

Anne Mastrangelo Gaffney of Albany, who used an artisan's sensibility and a teacher's commitment to shape a life of love and learning for a successful and boisterous clan in Albany's Pine Hills neighborhood, died May 30 at Our Lady of Mercy Life Center in Guilderland, New York. She was 92.

Anna Mastrangelo was born in her parents' home in Pelham, New York, on Sunday, October 18, 1925. She was the sixth and youngest child of Michael Mastrangelo and Maddolena Paolone Mastrangelo. Anne's parents were themselves born to families of artisans and raised in small Italian towns in the province of Molise. As young adults, they emigrated separately, Michael landing at Ellis Island in 1904 with \$3, Maddolena in 1911 with \$20. The couple had never met in Italy, but they were soon introduced to each other and united in an arranged marriage.

As *artigiani*, the Mastrangelos built a successful life in Pelham, then one of the most prosperous towns in Westchester County. Maddolena designed and made clothing, mostly for private clients. Michael, who had been a shoemaker in Italy, worked with his relatives in their shoe repair shop in the Bronx.

Anne Mastrangelo entered this environment of craftsmanship and work ethic in near silence, a shy child who often clung to her mother's hand and seldom said much. Pelham's public schools and Anne's flowering love of learning soon trumped the early diffidence. First at the Hutchinson School and later at Pelham Memorial High School, she ranked high in her class. In 1943, she earned recognition as the top girl student in Pelham High School. A plaque there still attests to this. In these early years, she formed a lifelong friendship with a neighborhood pal Phoebe Davis Sweetland.

With academic achievement came a lifelong feistiness and competitive spirit that showed itself in her schoolgirl athletic pursuit, field hockey, a game in which competitors use sticks to whack one another and, from time to time, a ball.

After high school, Anne moved to Albany to pursue a bachelor's degree in English and French at the University at Albany, which was then called State Teachers College. After completing student teaching at the former Milne School in Albany and at Philmont in Columbia County, she earned her degree in 1947.

During those years, like many of her contemporaries, she enjoyed refreshments and the social scene at Stittig's, the landmark Madison Avenue ice cream parlor. A stunning and vibrant young woman, Anne caught the eye of a soda jerk named Bill Gaffney, who shared her intellect, love of learning, and playful spirit. Although, having been distracted by a ball game, he was reportedly two hours late for their first date, Anne's feisty good humor prevailed. The friends and soulmates were married in Pelham on August 6, 1949.

Anne and Bill Gaffney launched teaching careers together at the public school in Galway, Saratoga County. They shared a classroom and a desk, with Anne teaching English while Bill taught history and coached sports. As was the custom in those days, after Anne became pregnant, she was no longer permitted to teach and was asked instead to serve as school secretary.

Their first daughter Catherine was born, and the family soon landed in a single-family home in Albany's Pine Hills neighborhood, a thriving haven for large, lively, and loud families. Anne settled into the life of a wife, mom, and homemaker, bearing and raising seven children as Bill moved into a successful career in banking.

She never abandoned pedagogy. Instead, in manifestation of her lifelong commitment, Anne focused her teaching skill and creative spirit on her children and their friends.

For example, the kids were learning to read before kindergarten, and Anne reinforced the lessons by buying them "Think and Do" workbooks. In those days, these books were a common component of educational drills for schoolchildren, if not for tykes.

Anne used the daily family ritual of dinner as a teaching opportunity. She taught the kids manners – one kid talking at any one time is enough – and word games before cleanup reinforced some English lessons.

Anne also used her teaching skills to share with her children her considerable gifts in the arts.

From her family's history as artisans – silversmith, clothing designer, shoemaker – she inherited a talent for visual arts. From a mother who sang operatic works around the

house and relatives who gathered round the piano to sing, she inherited a love of music and a fearlessness in singing.

So she sang. Anne routinely burst into songs from popular musicals. She often chose songs to communicate parental advice or conduct marital advocacy – as when she sang "Anything You Can Do, I Can Do Better," from *Annie Get Your Gun*, to a husband deemed to be mishandling a paint roller.

She could play the piano. And she could dance. She taught her youngest child, Margaret, to waltz and jitterbug around a kitchen cluttered with furniture. No injuries were reported.

Naturally, she encouraged her children to pursue the arts as well. They responded. One is a playwright. Another studied ballet. Two others became successful professional musicians at the highest level.

Anne showed her own talent in visual arts – painting creditable landscapes in oils after the children were abed, designing a prom dress for her daughter Susan, overseeing a redesign of the living room from 1940s cottage-style home to a more modern décor.

Like most teachers in those days, Anne delivered discipline with comparable skill and resolve. Her children remember marching into Sunday Mass in order of height. They also remember that any fidgeting was stilled immediately by a silent steely glare from Anne's green eyes.

Anne was also a relentlessly active mom. She cooked legendary pasta dinners and ensured that annual vacations in Lake George or Cape Cod ended without fatalities.

She often walked, piling the kids into the car for romps in Washington Park in Albany or in nearby Thatcher Park on the Helderberg Escarpment.

She also shared her gifts and hospitality with friends and neighbors. She supervised annual back-yard parties for her family and their friends that were so popular that some of the kids' friends continued to attend – long after their Gaffney contact had moved out of town.

And during the legendary Thanksgiving snowstorm of 1971, when she learned that a neighborhood family had its meal plans ruined by the weather, Anne found room for half a dozen more seats at the table, pulled off some loaves-and-fishes legerdemain with her turkey, and invited the Walsh clan to trudge through the snow and dine at her table. All

gave thanks.

Amid all these family obligations, Anne found time and energy to serve her community. She returned to the classroom to teach English to bankers every Wednesday night for several years in a continuing education program offered through the American Institute of Banking. (One smiles to picture a gray-flannel branch manager diagramming a sentence.) She also served as an officer with the Albany Jaycees in the 1960s and in the PTA at Vincentian Institute.

Throughout her life, Anne Gaffney moved with a quiet grace that was supported by her solid and thoughtful faith. She was a devout Catholic whose faith in the power of prayer expressed gratitude in good times and carried her through difficult times, including daily bedside time during the final wearying months of her son's illness and her husband's long decline.

"The longer I live, the more beautiful life becomes," the architect Frank Lloyd Wright once mused. "If you invest in beauty, it will remain with you all the days of your life." In her family, her home, and her professional and creative pursuits, Anne Gaffney, the daughter of artisans, always invested in – and, in every way, mirrored – beauty.

Anne Gaffney is survived by her children: Catherine Rogers of New York City; Bill Gaffney Jr. of Albany; Mick (Kate) Gaffney of Parsippany, New Jersey; Susan Bossa of Braintree, Massachusetts; James (Tammy) Gaffney of Rochester; and Margaret Cozzens of Clifton Park. She leaves grandchildren Josh (Alexa), Kacie (Dave), Chris, Leanne (Rick), Meghan, Will, Maria, Chris, Billy, and David; great-grandchildren Paityn, Sienna, AJ, Nico, Brady, and Aria; and 6 nieces and nephews. Her husband, Bill Gaffney, died in 2010. Their son John Gaffney, a classical pianist, died in 1990.

A funeral Mass will be held at 11:00 am on Monday, June 4, at St. Vincent de Paul Church, Albany. Burial will be at St. Agnes Cemetery, Menands.

Calling hours will be 4-7 p.m. Sunday, June 3, in the Magin and Keegan Funeral Home, 891 Madison Ave, Albany.

Memorial contributions may be made to Our Lady of Mercy Life Center, 2 Mercycare Lane, Guilderland, NY 12084. The family thanks the many physicians, nurses, and health care professionals who gave Anne compassionate care for 7 years at Our Lady of Mercy.

Events

JUN **Visitation** 04:00PM - 07:00PM

3

Magin and Keegan Funeral Home Inc
891 Madison Avenue,, Albany, NY, US, 12208

JUN **Service- St. Vincent de Paul Church, Albany**11:00AM

4

Magin and Keegan Funeral Home Inc
891 Madison Avenue,, Albany, NY, US, 12208

Comments



“ My sincerest condolences at this time of loss and sadness. Dr. Robert J. Congdon, Quincy College.

Robert J. Congdon - June 05, 2018 at 01:25 PM



“ One of the most positive memories when my son, Mark was little, was visiting with Anne on South Pine. We would have tea after Anne got toys out for Mark to pay with. He always called her "Annie with the toys". Thank you all for sharing your toys (from when you were his age) and your mother . She became such a good friend! Kathy Kelly

Kathy Kelly - June 03, 2018 at 01:38 PM



“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Anne M Gaffney.



June 02, 2018 at 10:40 AM



“ I'm so sorry for your loss and wish you comfort in your memories of her.
Jennifer Rogers

jen Rogers - June 02, 2018 at 07:53 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Anne M Gaffney.



June 01, 2018 at 01:23 PM



“ Cleo Cakridas sent a virtual gift in memory of Anne M Gaffney



Cleo Cakridas - June 01, 2018 at 12:48 PM



“ Susan, I am very saddened to hear that your Mom passed away, may her memory be eternal and may all her loved ones be blessed with good health and many years ahead to remember her. Losing one's Mom is a life passage, a woman is never the same. Please know you are in my thoughts during this difficult time. My deepest sympathy to you and your family.

Cleo Cakridas - June 01, 2018 at 12:52 PM



“ Susan, I was so sorry to hear of your loss. Your mother must have been a wonderful and kind woman since she has such a wonderful and kind daughter. I doubt if I can do anything to make it easier for you, but please know you have my deepest sympathy. I still remember when my own mother passed.

Betty Siegel

Betty Siegel - June 01, 2018 at 12:20 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Anne M Gaffney.



June 01, 2018 at 12:13 PM



“ Sue, I am so sorry to hear of the loss of your mother.

Tom Curran

Tom Curran - June 01, 2018 at 12:12 PM



“ The Malatino Family purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Anne M Gaffney.



The Malatino Family - June 01, 2018 at 11:08 AM



“ Cliff, Dolly, Craig and Alison Mastrangelo purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Anne M Gaffney.



Cliff, Dolly, Craig and Alison Mastrangelo - June 01, 2018 at 10:58 AM



“ I enjoyed many wonderful times at the Gaffney home on North Pine, first with Catherine during our St.Rose years and continuing long after Catherine had moved on. Anne was the magnet that drew me to that place. Some of my dearest memories are when I visited Albany with my growing family and we found ourselves at her front door to surprise her. Never did a peanut butter and grape jelly sandwich ever taste so good! Cathy, Billy, Michael, Susan, Bim and Merv - I wish I could be physically with you this week. My heart is full. I will honor your Mom by recommitting myself to a spirit of welcome and hospitality to all who ring my doorbell or knock at my heart. I remember you all and wish you peace as you mourn your great loss.
Marie Comeau Stigliani

Marie Stigliani - June 01, 2018 at 10:32 AM



“ Sue,
My deepest condolences to you and your family. You are all in my prayers.
Warmest wishes,
Leanne DiLeo

Leanne - June 01, 2018 at 10:29 AM



“ Tina Falconi lit a candle in memory of Anne M Gaffney



Tina Falconi - June 01, 2018 at 10:25 AM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Anne M Gaffney.



May 31, 2018 at 04:07 PM