



Mary (McCabe) Cosentino

November 21, 1930 - June 8, 2018

Mary (McCabe) Cosentino, 87, passed away on June 8th in Springfield, Illinois. She grew up in Avoca, Ireland where she once had to outrun a wild boar (she refused to ever let anything best her) and often ate wild onion sandwiches as there was nothing else to be had. While working at the Guinness factory in Dublin, she was named champion tapper after tapping more kegs than any of the men working there. Leaving everything she knew behind, she moved to the wilds of Winnetka Illinois to be a nanny. On her first day off, she ventured into the city on the L and decided to follow the crowds, ending up at Wrigley Field. She became a fan that day; Tony LaRussa, and all the managers that left the pitchers in too long in important play-off games probably played a role in the health problems she developed later in her life. On another venture into the city, she met her husband, Richard, at a dance at the Aragon Ballroom. She went on to raise 6 kids (some with more Irish Catholic guilt issues than others) and an astounding number of stray cats that all seemed to find their way to her backyard. She will be especially thrilled to be reunited with Manhattan, the foolish black kitten that broke her heart by running out in front of a car, and Patrick, the red-devil that wasn't happy unless he was taking a pound out of someone. In her new reality, Mary can again lace up her running shoes and train to defeat the Ol' Horse, her running nemesis that Mary was convinced was actually a man. Mary leaves behind a running legacy none can match. While in her 50's, she held the world record for 50 milers (a fact documented in an extremely obscure book that her 4th child accidentally got rid of and not even google has been able to locate another copy). Mary was fond of leaving other runners 'in her dust', a trait that was, fortunately, passed on to only a few of her offspring. She ran so many laps around Midway that surely the pilots all recognized her red head and t-shirts with the sleeves and neck cut off for comfort; her miles at Archer Park actually created a path in the grass. She won first place plaques from the various iterations of the Chicago Marathon, and won a car at the Magnificent Mile race on Michigan Avenue. She had to learn how to drive in a day as only licensed drivers could claim the prize. She walked or rode her bike, Bessy, everywhere. Regardless of how deep the snow, she carried home 2 – 3 brown bags of groceries on the handle bars of her bike every single day. She was the queen of reduce and re-use before environmentalism became popular; her green thumb turned the ramshackle family abode

into a (somewhat) respectable home. Mary enjoyed a good (or usually wicked) laugh and could often be found sneaking around, trying to scare the life out of her unsuspecting children. She couldn't control the "titters" that would burst forth if some poor soul happened to trip in front of her. She received an eat free forever card from Ray Croc, a running award from Mayor Harold Washington, and counted Mayor Bilandic as part of her floozy running crowd. With a generous heart of gold, she baked apple pies for the shut-ins, raised baby birds that fell out of nests, and scoffed at the doctors when they said her youngest, her namesake, would never walk as a result of her down syndrome. This youngest went on to become an alternate for the US team at the Special Olympics World Games in 1995. We always wondered if Mary Jr.'s success had something to do with the blessing she received from Pope John Paul the second. She surprised the rest of the kids and the one million people gathered at 5 Holy Martyrs church in Chicago, 1979 by breaking through a police line and nearly tackling the Pope with little Mary held overhead. The Pope was very gracious, gestured for the police to back up and gave Mary a blessing. Not one to shy away from anything, especially a bully, Mary wrote letters of protest to the British monarchy that likely would have gotten her on the no-fly list of today, raced in t-shirts she had specially made with political messages on them, and always did her part to fight oppression and inequality whether it was on a global level or in an ill-equipped special ed classroom. She joins her husband, Richard, her sisters Sheila and Nan, her brother, Christy, and countless other friends and family that have preceded her into the ever after. She leaves behind a legacy of kindness (well, except in the world of sports where her crazy competitiveness took over) and a family grateful for her example and sacrifice (and relieved that she has found peace after debilitating health issues): her son, Kevin (Sue), Yvonne Wayda (Brian), Eileen McHugh (John), Dawn, Marilyn (Ken Harris), and Mary. Her grandkids, Olivia, George, Jake, Jack, Kate, Mike, Ryan, Blake, Devlin, and Stella are lucky to have had their crazy "Granny" in their lives. Join us in honoring Mary's memory by line drying your laundry, go for a bike ride or a run, make a donation to an animal shelter or the Special Olympics, put an icy cold hand on a loved one's unsuspecting ankle, or destroy your competition and then chortle about it in unabashed delight.

To honor Mary's wishes cremation rites will be accorded by Hurley Funeral Home. She later will be entombed with her husband at Camp Butler National Cemetery in Springfield.

Comments



“ Nancy Wilson lit a candle in memory of Mary (McCabe) Cosentino



Nancy Wilson - June 16, 2018 at 08:26 PM



“ Much to my disappointment, I did not know Mary. What a beautiful obituary. Thank you for sharing her life's story. What an inspiration.



Lisa Ginos - June 14, 2018 at 08:41 AM