



Mrs. Mary Eleanor Slocum Behan

January 6, 1921 - August 10, 2015

Mary Eleanor Slocum Behan, a fiercely independent woman who had a knack for bringing out the best in others, died August 10, 2015 from complications of multiple myeloma. She was 94.

Though she was born and raised on a family farm in Baring, MO, she was destined for the big city. After a move to Kirksville as a teenager, she attended business school, and then set off for Washington, D. C. to support the war effort as a stenographer in the office of the Surgeon General.

She met her future husband, Francis James Behan, on a streetcar, and they were married on April 21, 1945. Their life together included raising five children in northern Virginia; spending six years in Brussels, Belgium, which allowed her to tour Europe; and taking trips with family and friends. She spent many winters in New Smyrna Beach, FL.

Her home was filled with mementos of her travels – including a collection of decorative spoons – and a never-ending supply of homemade chocolate chip cookies and banana bread. And while she never did reveal the secret to living into her 90s, her positive outlook on life and insistence on doing things herself marked her time on this earth until the end.

Mrs. Behan was preceded in death by her husband, and her son, Douglas. She is survived by her four sons, Robert and wife, Linda, of Roswell, GA, Thomas and wife, Helen, of Fairbanks, AK, Dennis and wife, Ronda, of Pendleton, OR, and Barry and wife, Gwen, of Haymarket, VA; daughter-in-law, Charlotte, of Fairbanks, AK; nephew, Joseph Bolcar and wife, Gail, of Henderson, NC; five grandchildren, Erin Behan, of Santa Monica, CA, Rebecca Behan, of Brooklyn, NY, Rachel Barnes, of Williamsburg, VA, Bryan and Kevin Behan, both of Haymarket, VA; three great-grandchildren, Devin, Reagan, and Owen.

Her remains will be laid to rest alongside her husband's at Arlington National Cemetery.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation at www.themmr.org.

Cemetery Details

Arlington National Cemetery

State Hwy. 110 & Memorial Dr.
Arlington, VA

Tribute Wall



“ *Mrs. Mary Eleanor Slocum Behan*

October 08, 2022 at 11:37 AM



“ *I knew I was going to be a very lucky person - not only by meeting Barry, but by becoming part of Nana B's world. When Barry took me and Rachel to meet his mom and dad at their house for dinner for the first time - she immediately made me feel like part of the family! She even had Rachel call her grandma that night!! I feel blessed to have been able to witness such a saint - She has taught me so much and probably never realized it. Words can not describe how much she has filled my life!!! All of her wonderful memories that surround us will help keep our hearts full during this difficult time, and her legacy will continue to be shared through our children. I will miss you greatly Nana B.*

Gwen Behan - August 18, 2015 at 11:22 AM



“ *I had the unique opportunity to become close to the Behan family during our years in Brussels. I lived with them during my Senior year of High School in order to graduate from the same school. Mrs. Behan had a way of making you feel completely at home. She always made me feel special and treated me just like a daughter. I never heard her raise her voice or get angry. With five sons it was impossible to put one past her, she knew about everything going on with our generation. But she never judged and if she was not happy with you she would kindly correct you. She was one of the most wonderful women I have ever known and I feel privileged to have known her. -Peg Mullen-*

Peggy Mullen - August 17, 2015 at 09:45 PM



“ *Never heard an unkind word from Aunt Mary. She was always positive , cheerful and ready to tell a joke or two. She loved her family and showed it with action on her part. She was generous and it was a honor to know her.*

Patricia Hawk - August 17, 2015 at 11:45 AM