

Mary Louisa Shear Brennan, wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and volunteer, left this world on Wednesday morning the 16<sup>th</sup> of August, 2017, after celebrating her 87<sup>th</sup> birthday and 64<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, and surrounded by her family for several days.

Mary was born August 8<sup>th</sup> 1930 in Hood River, Oregon to Grace (Creekpaum) and Elmer V. Shear, where her father, a plant pathologist, was sent by the US Department of Agriculture to address a pear blight. At the age of 8, the family moved to Maryland as a result of the USDA transferring Mary's father back to headquarters in Washington, D.C. They then moved to Pelham, NY. And finally, to Coeyman's Hollow in Albany County where the family operated a commercial apple orchard, Shear Farm. Mary attended the Albany Academy for Girls, graduating in 1948, and then followed in her father's footsteps to attend Cornell University, enrolled in the College of Human Ecology, graduating in 1952. While at Cornell she met her future husband, John "Jack" J. Brennan, who also graduated from Cornell in 1952, with a degree in Veterinary medicine, and they were married in 1953. After a short stint in Selma, Alabama managing a school cafeteria while Jack was a lieutenant in the US Air Force, they returned to the northeast, settling in Guilderland, NY.

Mary supported her husband in starting a veterinary practice, handling the operational side while Jack handled the cows, horses, dogs and cats. Also at this time, Mary found time to raise three loving, successful children, whom she adored: Peter T., M.D. (Elizabeth), John P (Jean), and Mary Ann Randall, C.R.N.A. Mary Ann and Mary shared the same birthday of August 8<sup>th</sup>, which they both so enjoyed. Once her children were raised she applied her motherly skills to her grandchildren, being "Moogra" or "Grammoo" (reflecting her love of cows) to Tom, Mike, Joe, Patrick, Kathleen, and Julia Grace, reading them Dr. Seuss's "Thidwick the Big-Hearted Moose," among other favorites.

Mary also became very involved in numerous civic and volunteer activities, including volunteering at the Guilderland High School guidance office, being a member of the town of Guilderland Environmental Committee, Chairing the local 4-H club (Fuller's Follies), being a stalwart member of the Thursday Group nature excursion troop, and co-authoring with Claire Schmidt (a Thursday Group member) "A Guide to the Natural Areas of Albany County." In later years she delighted in leading tours of the many historical and natural sights of the Albany area she so loved. Additionally, she and Jack were fortunate enough to enjoy a camp on Upper Saranac Lake, and Mary got involved in the Essex County Garden club and many, many other endeavors around the Lake.

We wish to thank all the many people who helped Mary and her family through her battle with Alzheimer's, including Hospice and Eddy Village at Beverwyck Care Center. Funeral services and internment are private. A celebration of life will be held later this fall. If you wish to honor Mary's life, please contribute to the Nature Conservancy, Adirondack chapter, (P.O. Box 65 Keene Valley, NY 12983), the Cornell University School of Human Ecology, or Planned Parenthood, 1040 State Street, Schenectady, NY 12307-1508.