



Mary Gatens-McKenna

December 2, 1928 - March 18, 2012

Mary Jo “Jody” Gatens-McKenna, age 83 of Fort Collins, Colorado died March 18, 2012 at a local Columbine Rehab facility, a company she had worked at for many years. Visitation is planned from 5:00 until 7:00 PM Friday, March 23rd at Goes Funeral Care, 3665 Canal Drive, Suite E, Fort Collins. Recitation of the Rosary will begin at 7:00 PM Friday. Mass of the Resurrection will be celebrated at 9:30 AM Saturday at St. Joseph Catholic Parish in Ft. Collins. Interment will be in Walnut Hill Cemetery, Kingman, Kansas followed by Recitation of the Rosary at 10:45 and a Memorial Mass at 11:00 am at St. Patrick’s Catholic Church also in Kingman. A luncheon will follow the mass on Monday. Mary Jo Gatens was born in Iowa City, Iowa on December 2, 1928 to James and Winifred Gatens. She grew up in Carroll, Iowa and graduated from Loretto Heights College in Denver with a BS in Nursing. She married Maurice McKenna in 1953 in Carroll and they live for a short while in Denver prior to settling in Fort Collins in 1956. They began a truck line; called McKenna-Beardsley Trucking, one of the first refrigerated trucks in Colorado. When Maurice died in 1959, she tried to run the company with an infant in tow. That wasn’t working out so she returned to nursing and became the Director of OB nursing at Poudre Valley Hospital in Fort Collins. Jody, as most knew her, also worked in nursing at a few private medical offices; and after taking time off to take care of and raise her children; began working at Columbine East Nursing Home where she eventually became the Director of Nursing. She retired three years ago as a pharmacy tech at Centre

Pharmacy. Jody was a longtime and active member of St. Joseph Parish and was also among the founding members of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish. She loved music and was quite talented as she participated in the Choir at SEAS for several years. She loved to play Bridge; attend musicals; travel; and she especially enjoyed being around her grandchildren. She is survived by four children, Patricia (and Dennis) Hotovec of Thornton, CO, James (and Shawna) McKenna of Ft. Collins, Maureen (and Geoffrey) Johns of Carbondale and Jeff Geilenkirchen of Ft. Collins; two step-sons, Loren (and Nancy) Geilen of Castle Rock, CO and Evan (and Jane) Geilenkirchen of North Platte, NE; eight grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by an infant son, Maurice E. McKenna; her husband, Maurice McKenna; her sister, Jane Prenger; and a step son, Phillip Geilenkirchen. Donations may be sent to Sisters of St. Joseph, P.O. Box 279, Concordia, KS 66901.

Tribute Wall



“ *Mary Gatens-McKenna*

October 25, 2022 at 06:14 PM



“ *I have such happy memories of Mary Jo the name I knew her as...She and Jane, Maurice and Frank were fortunate to be friends as children and adults. Our parents were all siblings tho we moved and lived in Kansas and they were in Iowa. Mary Jo and I were fortunate to have time with each other and the other cousins as well as traveling together. Before that time Jane and I lived together working for my Dad when she got engaged to Red. Such happy memories of cousins as well as Winifred and Owen my aunt and uncle. Grandma Conwell was an Owen and my grandson has that name as well as my youngest son. Know you don't need a genealogy lesson but as I said I have such happy memories of Mary Jo.*

Love Jean

Jean Smith - March 18, 2012 at 12:00 AM

LR

“ I have been friends with Jeff since our high school days...so I just wanted to express my sincere condolences to the entire family. Having lost my own Mom just a few years ago, I am sad to say that I know something about what Jeff and the family are going through. Even though I'm sure it is some comfort to know that your Mom is no longer suffering, I also know that nothing can really prepare you for the pain you experience after the loss of a parent. Please know that my heart goes out to you all...I will keep you in my prayers during this difficult time.

Lori Radcliff - March 18, 2012 at 12:00 AM

MO

“ March 23, 2012

To Jody's family,

I have had the pleasure of knowing Jody since about 1974. My family moved to Boxelder Estates at that time. Things felt so home like (originally I was from farm life in Illinois) as we were able to hear her pigs at their feeder. At that time, she drove a station wagon and worked nights.

She always greeted me with "Hi Neighbor", I'll miss that.

Over time I started to work at Columbine as an R.N. It felt like I worked there a long 20 years, but that was nothing compared to Jody. We saw each other on a regular basis and talked of many things. Like garage sales and her booth at the flea market. Like kids and that 5 pound key chain with the grandkids pictures on. She was so proud of her kids. She was a determined extra hard worker. She left no doubt of where you stood and her opinion of how things should be done. Actually I learned a great deal from her regarding ethics and nursing skills. She was one of the first B.S.N.'s that I knew at that time. She enjoyed her nursing school alumni and reunions. We would kid about stopping smoking. She was one woman that carried off wearing black well, including the nun at Halloween. She had a particular story and name for Bob that was not usually said by a good Catholic girl. I was always asked to guess her age, but not by her. Or the time she kicked an empty box which was full of tile, resulting in broken bones. Or the toe problem which required that she wear sandals a long cold time. She always wore her reading glasses and looked over the tops of the lens. She made lists to make lists in her neat small penmanship, and we found a few of the lost lists in charts.

We would always chat at the H.O.A. meetings. Going over the neighbors idiosyncrasies. She would laugh about her son bringing a grand son over and they were looking for refreshments in her frig.

The son said told the little guy that "this grandma only has club soda in her frig" and she would laugh again. Oh, and the times of the basement flooding. She would say she had weeded, by spraying round up. Sounded good to me.

Unfortunately we lost contact over the past 5 years. Jeff, Kathy W., Eileen P. and others kept me partially up to speed. It boggles my mind of all the lives she touched and the wonderful people that remember her with a smile. I hope some of my memories bring a smile to your face. I think she would have liked that.

Miss you lots Jody.

Love, Mary Oakes

Mary Oakes - March 18, 2012 at 12:00 AM

SP

“ I have so many wonderful memories of visits in Colorado with my favorite aunt and my cousins. My dear aunt and cousins attended weddings, hospital stays and funerals of my immediate family. She always provided loving support and caring for my parents, my sister, my husband and myself. I can see her in heaven wearing her muumuu, drinking a gin and tonic and playing poker with the Prengers. I will miss her dearly.

Sandra & Alan Petzet - March 18, 2012 at 12:00 AM

MH

“ I just heard the news about Jody's passing. How sorry I am to hear that such a wonderful person is gone from our lives. She provided so much support and friendship to Marge and Chris and me and always with a smile or a remark that would make us laugh! I always tried to look Jody up when I was in town so I could catch up with her and get a laugh. A dear sweet wonderful person - she will be missed. My sympathies to you all.

Mary Jane Rauch Hayter - March 18, 2012 at 12:00 AM