



## Lorraine Ruth Cullen

November 5, 1924 - September 21, 2025

HAMPTON - Lorraine R. Cullen, 100, long-time resident of Hampton, passed away gracefully on Sunday, September 21, 2025, with her son Tony by her side.

Beloved wife of the late Anthony E. "Joe" Cullen. Loving mother of Anthony E. Cullen III of Hampton, Deborah J. Cullen of Hampton, Patricia L. Cullen and her husband Mark E. Chessick of Nashua, and William F. Cullen and his wife Karen of Ponte Vedra Beach, FL. Dear sister to Ellen Northan, Rochester, NY. Cherished grandmother of Hannah and Molly Scott. Sister-in-law to thirteen adored individuals (Bruno, Cullen, Northan and Pattison) who pre-deceased her. And Aunt Lorraine to many loved nieces and nephews.

Lorraine Ruth Kufer, daughter of the late Frederick William Kufer and Ella Muth Kufer, was born in Chicago on November 5, 1924, and raised in Lombard, IL. Growing up in the brick house on Stewart Avenue held many cherished memories for Lorraine over the years, despite the trying times of the world around her. The Great Depression which struck in 1929 and WWII in 1939 overshadowed everything. During this period, their great neighbors were like an extension of family, all helping each other. And so it was that Imogene Loveday came to live with the Kufers after her mother passed away. Lorraine was five and Imogene six - they were raised like two peas in a pod. In 1939, Lorraine's sister Ellen was born and the Kufer family was complete.

Lorraine attended Hammerschmidt Elementary, Lincoln grade school and Glenbard High. "Music was the subject I adored in any shape or form." Piano lessons from a neighbor started early, at age 4. Choir and marimba followed on during high school, as did music composition. Over the years Lorraine participated in numerous recitals, musical pageants, and state band contests. One highlight was performing in a 150-piece marimba orchestra as part of the 1942 and 1943 Chicagoland Music Festivals held at Soldier's Field to crowds of over 100K people. Despite her talent and dedication, depression economics were such that the dream of attending Ohio's Oberlin College music program was out of reach. However, Lorraine pursued her love of music throughout life. She continued to play piano and marimba at home and sang in the church choir. She amazed her children often by being able to play complex pieces of music by ear. Later in life she spent many enjoyable years singing and performing with The Newburyport Choral Society (Alto 2). This included their performance trip across France which Lorraine shared with her daughter Deborah.

After high school Lorraine took a secretarial position with a firm in Chicago, commuting in by train as she had grown up without a car. Lorraine joined a women's business sorority, window shopped with the girls at Marshall Field's on lunch break, and with her good friend Holly, spent occasional Friday nights at the Aragon Ball Room on Chicago's north side to practice their Arthur Murray dance steps to live bands. One June evening at the Aragon, a young man asked Lorraine to dance. Joe Cullen, an Army veteran, was attending engineering school and shared a room with his brother Larry in Chicago. Joe and Lorraine quickly became a couple and were engaged by Christmas. They wed on August 21, 1948, with Lorraine's pals serving as her attendants, Ellen as her junior bridesmaid and Joe's brother Frank as best man. With Ella's peonies in full bloom, a home garden reception was held for guests. The beauty and joy of that day shines through in the family photos.

The couple initially settled into their small Chicago flat, and Lorraine continued to work up until they welcomed the birth of Tony in 1949. Later that year they would move to Woburn, MA. The boisterous Cullen clan from Campbell Street, consisting of Joe's seven siblings, welcomed shy Lorraine into the family. Lorraine's meticulously typed letters home to Lombard, saved by her mother, captured these first few years of married life as a new mom, learning to drive, and growing her family by welcoming the birth of daughter Deborah in 1950. Tony and Debbie saw the Cullen cousin count grow providing more playmates, and Lorraine had shared camaraderie with the other new moms. Joe's work as an electrical engineer offered unique contract work opportunities including alongside his brother Jack testing GE aircraft engines on top of NH's Mount Washington. The proximity to skiing was a bonus for Joe and the family eventually settled in Jackson and welcomed third child Patricia in 1958. When the NH contract ended, they followed Joe's work, moving to Greeley Colorado for a year. The family spent weekends exploring the mountains and the mining ghost towns. When it was time to put down permanent roots, they moved to Hampton and purchased the house on Winnacunnet Road. With the birth of son William in 1962, the family was complete.

Hampton soon became home base with great neighbors, proximity to schools, church, the beach, and a manageable drive to Campbell Street for Sunday dinners with Nana. Taking cues from her mother, Lorraine had a large vegetable garden, put up crab apple and grape jellies, passed on her sewing skills through 4-H and baked masses of Christmas cookies and fruitcakes for gifts every year. Lorraine took her and the neighborhood kids on trips, tent camping in the White Mountains and day trips to North Hampton beach. Lorraine's children had an enviable relationship with their mother and were often told so by their friends.

The family attended Sunday mass at Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Parish in Hampton. Lorraine volunteered there, participated in the Catholic Women's Club, sang in the choir, and was a Lector at masses proclaiming the readings and leading the responses. Lorraine attended weekly prayer meetings held at the Franciscan Friary in Rye finding fellowship which led to close lifelong friendships. All these connections further cemented Lorraine's lifelong spiritual bond with Christ. She prayed daily for blessings for others. More than once, she would pass a note to one of her children saying she had received 'a word' that was meant for them. Later in life Lorraine became a Stephen Minister and through their program became a care giver offering spiritual encouragement to various "care receivers" in need. She found this experience profoundly rewarding.

Eventually rejoining the workforce when her youngest was in junior high, Lorraine took a private secretarial position in North Hampton, where her working knowledge of Shakespeare filled one of the position requirements. She later joined the Bean Insurance Agency, conveniently located next door, where she worked with June and sons up to her retirement. Around this time Joe and Lorraine welcomed her 92-year-old mother Ella to the Hampton home. They both loved having her mom close at last.

With Joe's sudden passing at age 70 in 1991 and Ella's passing only a year later, Lorraine drew on her faith and her children for comfort. The family has many great memories of time spent with Mom including trips to St. Thomas, mother daughter trips to Orlando, skiing at Vail, a bucket list trip to San Francisco with dinner at the Top of the Mark, seeing Redwood trees in Yosemite Valley, attending the NH Scottish Highland Games with sister Ellen and brother-in-law Jan, numerous gatherings and celebrations with extended family and friends, and countless drives to the beach with Tony to feed the gulls.

Lorraine continued with her music through The Newburyport Choral Society up until the age of 92. At her last Christmas concert, she connected during intermission with a musician who played marimba. They chatted briefly and he handed her the mallets. Despite not having played marimba in over 45 years, she played White Christmas beautifully, astounding the musician and her daughters. The family hopes to contribute to a music scholarship in her memory.

Lorraine was able to age gracefully in place at her home up until very recently, only possible through the love and tireless devotion by Debbie and Tony to make that happen. The family would like to thank the staff of St. Ann Rehabilitation and Nursing Center in Dover for their recent care.

Through to the end Lorraine knew who she was, who her children were, and how blessed they all were to have each other. The family knows that at her passing Lorraine was met by her many loved ones and friends who had gone on ahead of her – some a bit more boisterous than others. To Lorraine, Mom, we say, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” We will miss you so.

Services and interment at High Street Cemetery in Hampton will be private.

Please do consider a donation in Lorraine’s memory to either a food pantry in your area or another charity of your choice.

# Tribute Wall

KC

“ Dear Tony, Pat and Bill, I was so sorry to hear about your Mom’s passing. She was a wonderful person and I have many memories of her.

*One is the party she hosted at your home with ALL the aunts, uncles and cousins. I can’t remember the year, but I do remember how gracious, and brave, she was for having that bunch all in one place. It was a special day I’ll never forget.*

*Another memory is of Lorraine driving to Maine to rescue Joe, Jerry, Jack and me on a Tri R excursion gone awry. I was struck by how calm and collected she was, like it was no big deal.*

*And of course Michelle and I loved getting her Christmas cards which were so special.*

*Please accept our deepest condolences.*

*Love, Kevin.*

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**Kevin Cullen** - February 05 at 09:46 AM

PC

“ 70 files added to the tribute wall



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**Pat Cullen** - September 23, 2025 at 03:23 PM