



Mary L. Pongrace

May 6, 1927 - July 25, 2015

Rye - Mary Pongrace, 88, of Rye, died on Saturday, July 25, 2015 in her home at Webster at Rye.

She was born at home on May 6, 1927 in Jermyn, PA, in an upstairs apartment over a restaurant owned by her parents Eva Edmunds and Wilson S. Maury. She was the fifth child, and the fourth daughter of six children.

While in high school in Harrisburg, PA, she supported the war efforts working in an RCA factory testing radar screens after school. Mary graduated from Lancaster Catholic High School in 1945.

In 1948, Mary graduated from St. Joseph's Nursing School in Lancaster, PA. In the months following her graduation, she moved to Houston, TX to work in the OB-GYN department in a local hospital. While there, Mary participated in the delivery of hundreds of babies, demonstrating a capacity for care giving that she exemplified throughout her life.

In 1950, while chaperoning an Air Force cadets dance, Mary met the love of her life, Don Pongrace. They were married less than three months later on September 3, 1950.

Their first home was in Riverside, CA, where they arrived with a single trunk and \$75 to their names. Don was sent to Okinawa for what was supposed to be a short term posting, which turned into a year. Don flew B-29s in what

became the Korean War, and after his return, they were posted to Savannah, Georgia from 1952 to 1956, where their first three sons, Jim, Mike and Dave were born.

In 1956, Mary and Don moved to South Hadley Falls, MA when Don was posted to Westover AFB. He was on constant alert during the Cuban Missile Crisis flying B-52's and deployed for many periods of time during the Cold War. In South Hadley, they had their next two sons, Don and Joe.

In 1966, after several more postings in many different states, they settled in what became their forever home at 200 Love Lane in Rye. To get authorization to make the move to off base, Don had to show his commanding officer that he could get to the base in 15 minutes in the event of an alert. To do that, he and Mary threw a party at the house and invited the squadron, including the squadron commander. He gave his permission the next day.

While Don was stationed abroad during the Vietnam War, Mary raised her five boys, ranging in ages from 7 to 15, all while working as an active Registered Nurse, a position she held for 20 years.

She and Don were very active in Revolutionary War re-enactments during the 1970s and early 1990s, culminating in the march to Yorktown by the NH brigade, which she and Don did together, as they did everything. They will be leaving their collection of revolutionary war weapons to the Rye Historical Society as a tribute to this collective passion.

Of the many accomplishments in her life, Mary was proudest of her five sons, all of whom were Eagle Scouts and achieved graduate degrees in their respective fields. Mary is survived by James Pongrace, Michael and Sue Pongrace of Fairfax, VA, Donald and Olwen Pongrace of Washington DC and Joseph and Ellen Pongrace of North Hampton, NH; her eight grandchildren:

Marya, Erin, David, Stephen, Matt, Kathleen, Sarah and Aidan; and her three great grandchildren: Gavin, Lily and Delaney. She was predeceased by the love of her life, Don Pongrace, her son David, and her grandsons Billy and Jake Pongrace. It is expected that her late husband and family greeted her with open arms in true Pongrace fashion. Rest in Peace, Mary Pongrace.

Visiting hours will be from 5-7 PM on Wednesday, July 29, 2015 in the Remick & Gendron Funeral Home-Crematory, 811 Lafayette Rd., Hampton. Services will be held at 10 AM on Thursday at the Rye Congregational Church, 580 Washington Rd., Rye 03870. Burial will follow in the Central Cemetery, Rye. Relatives and friends are respectfully invited. In lieu of flowers, The family suggests memorial donations be made in Mary's name to the Rye Congregational Church at the above address.

Cemetery Details

Central Cemetery

20 Central Road
Rye, NH

Previous Events

Visitation

JUL **29.** 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Remick & Gendron Funeral Home - Crematory
811 Lafayette Road ·
Hampton, NH 03842
(603) 926-6500
info@remickgendron.com
<https://www.RemickGendron.com/>

Service

JUL **30.** 10:00 AM (ET)

Rye Congregational Church
580 Washington Road
Rye, NH

Tribute Wall

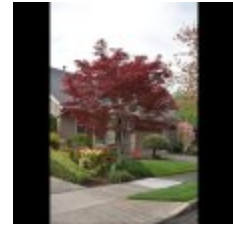


“ *Mary L. Pongrace*

September 18, 2022 at 12:49 AM



“ *Red Leaf Japanese Maple was purchased for the family of Mary L. Pongrace.*



July 30, 2015 at 07:49 AM



“ *The O'Keefe Family purchased the Basket Full of Wishes for the family of Mary L. Pongrace.*



The O'Keefe Family - July 28, 2015 at 08:37 AM



“ *1 file added to the album Best of Day*



Michael Pongrace - July 28, 2015 at 08:05 AM

LH

“ *Lans Griffith, Mark Hauck, Ki Harvey purchased the Strength & Solace Spray for the family of Mary L. Pongrace.*



Lans Griffith, Mark Hauck, Ki Harvey - July 28, 2015 at 07:09 AM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Mary L. Pongrace.*



July 27, 2015 at 10:44 AM