



Josephine V Gourley

March 20, 1918 - November 26, 2010

Josephine Veronica Gourley, known affectionately as “Jo” by her family and many friends, passed away on Friday, November 26, 2010. She was 92 years old and had just celebrated the 68th anniversary of her marriage to “Ted” Gourley. Thanksgiving was always a special time for Jo’s family to gather, and on her last Thanksgiving Day she was not alone. Her children and grandchildren who live on the East Coast were with her. Soft-spoken and petite, she was foremost a lady and raised her seven children to be kind and accepting of others.

Born on March 20, 1918, in Paterson, New Jersey, Jo was the daughter of Susan Marie (nee Brett) Radigan and John Joseph Radigan. She was preceded in death by her parents, her sister Anna Kent and her brother John. Jo had a beautiful life, one that took her far away from her hometown but never erased her happy memories of growing up in her father’s big house on the corner of Market Street, of listening to the swing music played by her brother John and his band, or her special childhood friendships with Rita, Claire, and Gertrude. She attended St. Joseph’s School, in Paterson, and graduated from Eastside High School. She was employed for a time as a clerk for the Wright Aeronautical Corporation. On November 21, 1942, she married Theodore J. Gourley, an ambitious airplane machinist who soon received a commission in the United States Army Air Corps.

As a new bride, Jo made her first journey across the country alone. She often told her family the story of those seven days on standby during the war,

traveling from La Guardia Field to Los Angeles in order to be with her husband, of how she knew no one and slept at least one night in a women's public restroom/lounge. She told, too, of giving birth to her first son while his father was at war overseas—at one point learning that Ted was “missing in action.”

As the wife of a career military officer, Jo lived in many different locales, experiencing cultures and often significant social change in these places. In the post-war years, she lived in Newfoundland, Canada, then South Hadley Falls, Massachusetts. In the mid-1950s, she lived in segregated Montgomery, Alabama, a time of civil rights protests in that city sparked by Rosa Parks in defiance of Jim Crow laws. From there, the Gourley family next moved to the lush mountains of Wahiawa, Hawaii—this at a time before Hawaii became a state. In 1959, the family returned to New Jersey, settling in Mount Holly. She was then the mother of seven children—three girls and four boys. As her children grew, she was both a Brownie and Cub Scout mother. Throughout the years, too, she was an active member of the McGuire Officers' Wives Club and the Altar Rosary Society of Sacred Heart Church in Mt. Holly.

But Jo's traveling days were not quite over. In the mid-1960s, her husband's final overseas assignment required relocation to the Azores Islands, off the coast of Portugal. After three years, the family returned once more to Mount Holly in 1968. Even then, Jo and Ted continued their romantic adventure together, enjoying mid-winter cruises to the Caribbean and Central America, and also traveling across country multiple times to visit their children in California. The old silver Cadillac with the “Ted and Jo” license plate, made many stops along the way—in Illinois, in Texas, South Dakota and other states—as the couple visited friends they had made throughout their lives.

As a girl, Jo had developed a special interest for designing clothing. She was a self-taught seamstress, who sewed not only the holiday dresses for her three daughters, often with the raw silks and brocades her husband brought back from his flights to the Far East, but also numerous evening gowns and wedding dresses for friends and family members. She had often expressed an

interest in pursuing fashion design as a career. But for Jo Gourley, family came first always. She was devoted to her children and later, her grandchildren. She welcomed her children's spouses into her life as if they were her own sons and daughters.

Jo often expressed to her children, especially her daughters, the need to be independent. During those times when her officer-husband was away on assignment, Jo had to care for her growing family on her own, often without the benefit of an extended family nearby. As a result, she was herself strong-willed and had the remarkable ability to remain hopeful and positive, despite the fears and disappointments she at times experienced.

Surviving are her husband, Lt. Col. U.S. Air Force (retired) Theodore J. Gourley and seven children: Dr. Theodore J. Gourley, Jr., Mt. Holly, NJ; Janice Gourley Shaffer, Escondido, Calif.; Dr. Dennis Radigan Gourley, Woodbridge, VA; Susan Marie Gourley-Damon, Chalfont, PA; Paula Gourley-Taylor Kristiniak, Williamstown, NJ; LTC. John H. Gourley, Ft. Lewis, WA; and Kevin Nu-o-wano Gourley, Boston, MA. Additionally, she is survived by seven grandchildren and five step-grandchildren; one great-grand daughter and five step-great-grandchildren. Her brother Frank X. Radigan lives in MD.

Her family wishes to thank all those who cared for Jo during her final year—especially the entire staff of the Maple Unit at Virtua Rehabilitation Hospital, Mt. Holly. Jo's kindness for others came full circle during these final months of her life. So many people were compassionate towards her in her struggle to endure the debilitating effects of Alzheimer's Disease.

Jo's family will celebrate her life at a viewing from 2-4 & 7 – 9 P.M. on Thursday, December 2, at Perinchief Chapels, 438 High Street, Mount Holly, NJ, and at a burial mass at 11 A.M. on Friday, December 3, at Sacred Heart Church, Mt. Holly. Interment will be in the BGWCD New Jersey Veteran's Memorial Cemetery.

Jo Gourley loved receiving flowers, to be sure! But in lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Alzheimer's Assoc. <http://www.alz.org/index.asp> or one of

your favorite charities in honor of Jo.

Previous Events

Service

DEC 3. 11:00 AM (ET)

Sacred Heart Church in Mount Holly
260 High St.
Mount Holly, NJ

Tribute Wall



“ *Josephine V Gourley*

October 29, 2022 at 11:57 AM



“ *Josephine V Gourley*

October 29, 2022 at 09:53 AM