



## Catherine Elizabeth Coburn

May 21, 1934 - May 11, 2021

Cathy was born on May 21, 1934 in Fall River, MA to George A and Catherine I (Ryan) Wilkinson. She graduated from the Dominican Academy in Fall River and was awarded a full scholarship to Albertus Magnus College from which she graduated in 1955. She remained a proud and connected alumna for the rest of her life. Cathy lived in the Hartford area for most of the last 66 years and in West Hartford, a place she loved, for the last 53 years of her life. She passed peacefully on 11 May, 2021.

Cathy married the late Richard J Coburn in 1955 and is survived by her three children Jenifer (Denis Guillemette), Katy and Steven (Mary), who were her pride and joy (most of the time). She is also survived by her much-loved grandsons Nathaniel, Michael and Max, as well as great granddaughter Sorrel, and by her beloved bonus daughter Maria Eva Elli of Asunción, Paraguay, and her children Isabel and Tanya. Cathy also leaves behind many nieces and nephews who she loved and cherished.

Cathy was predeceased by her beloved siblings George, Joseph, Irene and Maureen. They were a close and caring group of siblings and those relationships cemented her love of family and the communities she belonged to.

Cathy loved the written word. She instilled in her children at an early age the joy of reading and she could always be found with a stack of books in various states of completion. She was the go-to person for any question related to grammar, literature or history when her three children were growing up. She

freely admitted that math was not her thing (so foisted us off on dad) and she remained haunted by the freshman college math course that almost sabotaged her scholarship.

A lifelong learner, Cathy returned to school to earn her Masters in Library Science from Southern Connecticut University. Becoming a librarian was a natural evolution for Cathy and she loved being a children's librarian. She derived great joy in selecting the perfect book for a child. For a time, she had her own independent bookseller business, Carousel Books, that provided book fairs for schools and personalized book selections for children.

She took the notion of service to her community seriously. She worked for causes near and dear to her heart with a focus on those in need. She liked to cause what the late John Lewis referred to as "Good Trouble" – or she liked to refer to as "rabble rousing". Some of her cherished causes included Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, League of Women Voters, and the House of Bread. Any cause that advocated for the underdog she was ready to support with time, with a sharply worded letter to the editor, an appearance at a meeting or canvassing. Her letter writing highlighted her passion, her determination and her ability to turn a phrase. Beware the poor soul caught in her withering gaze or prose.

Cathy loved family: her children, her grandchildren and her special great-granddaughter Sorrel and was always there for anyone in her family or extensive circle of friends who needed her. When babies were born, or people took ill, she was ready to drop everything and lend a helping hand. Cathy was always there at every school or sporting event yelling encouragement when appropriate (or inappropriate). She selflessly gave her time to her family – both immediate and extended, her friends and her communities. She could be counted on for a hug, an attentive ear, a sage piece of advice or, if called for, a verbal kick in the rear.

She loved the smell of the ocean and the sound of the waves and considered herself fortunate to grow up near the shore and live most of her life a short way from the ocean. She was proud of her Irish heritage (we're not so certain

about the 50% that was English) and enjoyed her opportunity to visit her ancestral homeland. She loved to travel and was a continual consumer of history and literature.

The family would like to thank the McAuley community and staff and the various care givers, including Angela, Beata and Anna, who helped her as she aged. We would especially like to thank Anna Karas who provided such loving care for Mom particularly as the pandemic raged last year.

The family will hold a memorial service and gathering at a date and time to be determined. If you would like to make a donation in Catherine's name the family suggests the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation ([jdrf.org](http://jdrf.org)), the House of Bread ([hobread.org](http://hobread.org)) or a charity of your choosing that supports those in need in your local community.