



Elizabeth "Betty" Porell

June 12, 1934 - November 14, 2025

Elizabeth "Betty" Porell passed away on the morning of November 14, 2025 of a broken heart. She had been married to Richard Porell for sixty-nine years until his passing thirty-five days prior. Thirty-five days was the longest that they had ever been apart since they were married and her family is comforted that they will rest together.

Betty was born to Walter and Lisbet (Korb) Heery, into one of the poorest neighborhoods in New Haven on June 12, 1934 at the height of the Great Depression. She grew up with three generations sharing 2 ½ bedrooms. Despite poverty she had fond memories and her family instilled her lifelong passions; a love of math from her grandfather, the importance of being a strong woman from her mother, and a love of raising children from her father. In addition, Betty witnessed government and community efforts alleviating poverty in the area. Betty never forgot the value of these lessons.

Betty was the first in her family to go to college, enrolling at Albertus Magnus. There she paid her own way working odd jobs and for the registrar. While at Albertus Magnus Betty met Richard "Dick" Porell at a mixer with Yale University. Betty insisted that she finish school, still planning on a career. She prevailed on the issue of graduation, one of only two students graduating with a mathematics degree, but said "Dick was a persuasive guy," when discussing her career.

Their marriage survived a bumpy start when their car caught fire and burned days before the honeymoon but thrived for the next sixty-nine years. With a new “old” car they sped off together and for 69 years they never looked back. Their sweetness, kindness and love for one another served as examples for all their children and grandchildren.

Betty taught school for a year in Indiana while Dick was in the Army. Upon returning to Connecticut Betty interviewed for an actuarial trainee position at the Travelers. When discussing the career path it ended at Associate Actuary. She was told that full actuaries were officers and officers were men. Betty refused the position on the grounds that women should have equal positions.

Soon there were five boys in six years and a girl seven years later. Betty put career thoughts on hold and became a PTA member, Den mother, election volunteer, CCD teacher and Mom. According to her own count there were 30-45 diapers a day, five loads of laundry daily, 52 windows to wash twice a year, 168 meals a week, five teenage boys in the house at one time and a lock on the freezer.

When the boys got older, she spent more time volunteering, a job she loved. There was no task she wouldn't try. When her church sponsored a large Laotian family, Betty helped them get settled and purchased furniture and accessories for the apartment. When one of the Laotians asked Betty to attend the wedding, she became a Justice of the Peace to ensure the marriage was recorded. When a friend's disabled daughter wanted to live on her own, Betty worked with banks, lawyers and social services to see that it happened. Whenever Betty saw someone in need, she tried to fill it with love and kindness.

Her efforts were fearless. For many years Betty tutored students in math, first

in Hartford and then in Fort Myers, Florida. She volunteered at the poorest schools. She reflected that these were just like the children she grew up with. When Betty saw a woman getting screamed at by the side of the road and she stopped to ensure the woman was OK and safe ignoring her own safety.

In 1981 bakery owners Betty knew wanted to find a place to donate leftover baked goods. Betty found that a new charity, the House of Bread, would accept them. For decades Betty picked up frozen baked goods from the bakery and delivered them to the House of Bread. She worked in the kitchen, set up housing and did any needed task. When families came in needing clothing Betty would speed off and return with what they needed. Betty became a board member and was eventually recognized by the House of Bread for all her good works. Betty was recognized again posthumously at the November House of Bread Hunger Banquet, an event Betty and Dick sponsored annually.

In the 1980s Betty and Dick invested in and flipped a number of properties. When they moved to Florida Betty found that Catholic Charities had a housing shortage for battered and displaced persons. Betty and Dick identified and purchased properties for Catholic Charities and then fully furnished them. Betty was not beyond persuading a used furniture store into donating half her purchase. Catholic Charities honored Richard and Elizabeth with the Frank Gaelena, Sr. Humanitarian Award in 2016 for this and other efforts.

She is survived by her children, James Porell and Louisa Kaestle of Pine Plains, NY, Robert and Patricia (Arthur) Porell of Wethersfield, CT, Ronald and Barbara (Gardner) Porell of Southbury, CT, John and Agnes (Oetjen) Porell of Glastonbury, CT, Thomas and Mindy (Magalnick) Porell of Newington, CT, Susan (Porell) and Kevin Blenke of Stamford, CT; grandchildren Kelly (Porell) and Brian Cannon, Timothy Porell, Jeffrey Porell, Kara Porell, Stuart Porell

and Ryan Tessier, Matthew Porell, Sarah (Porell) and Coleman Rowlett-Porell, Lauren Porell, Adam Porell, Emma Blenke, Jack Blenke , Connor Blenke; great grandchildren Bennett Cannon and Kathryn Cannon. She was predeceased by her parents and brothers; Walter Gordon Heery and James Heery.

The Porell family would like to acknowledge the services and thank all those that cared for Betty in the final years of her life. Giving help was easy for Betty while accepting help was not. Particularly they thank Shanna, her home health aide, the staff at the McAuley in West Hartford and the staff at the Residence in Glastonbury. Their dedication, caring and level of service was greatly appreciated.

Betty Porell's life will be honored at a Mass of Christian Burial at 10 AM on December 20th at St Peter Claver Church, 47 Pleasant St, West Hartford CT, 06107. This will be followed by a burial at Mount Saint Benedict Cemetery, 1 Cottage Grove Rd, Bloomfield, CT 06002. Finally, a Celebration of Life/Luncheon will follow.

In lieu of flowers Betty asked that donations be made to the House of Bread. Donations can be made at www.hobread.org or by sending the donation to The House of Bread, 27 Chestnut St, Hartford, CT 06120

Cemetery Details

Mt. St. Benedict Cemetery

1 Cottage Grove Rd
Bloomfield, CT

Previous Events

Mass of Christian Burial

DEC **20**. 10:00 AM (ET)

Church of St. Peter Claver
47 Pleasant St.
West Hartford, CT

Tribute Wall



“ Molloy Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Elizabeth "Betty" Porell



Molloy Funeral Home - December 16, 2025 at 03:32 PM

LR

“ Lauren and Brandon Rowe purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Elizabeth "Betty" Porell.



Lauren and Brandon Rowe - December 02, 2025 at 05:19 PM

LR

“ Lauren and Brandon Rowe planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Elizabeth "Betty" Porell.

Lauren and Brandon Rowe - December 02, 2025 at 05:19 PM

TA

“ Tom, so sorry to read about another great loss. But, another great tribute, this time for a remarkable woman.

My thoughts are with you.

Tom Andrea

Tom Andrea - November 30, 2025 at 08:49 AM

DK

“ I remember Betty and Dick Porell with great fondness for their warmth, wit and generosity. Betty was reminiscent of my own mom who passed years earlier. My sincere condolences to Tom, Mindy, Lauren and Adam. The Knapp's have fond memories of our time in Otis. Thank you for sharing this great lady with us all!!

Don Knapp - November 29, 2025 at 09:49 AM