



## Madeline Vivian McKernan

January 31, 2014

Madeline S. McKernan, 84, of West Hartford died peacefully on Friday, January 31, 2014 surrounded by her family. Born in the Bronx, NY, Madeline was the daughter of the late Frank and Josephine (Viscardi) Sciarroni. Madeline graduated from Maryville College in St. Louis, Missouri in 1949 with a Bachelors degree; later she earned her Masters from Wesleyan University. In 1951, Madeline began what would become a 60-year footprint in the field of education when she assumed her first position as a mathematics teacher at Windsor High School. She later worked as director of education at the Morse School of Business and the Hartford Insurance Group. Madeline married Edward F. McKernan in 1957 and was raising their three children on Rumford Street when she started an active and dedicated career in public service to West Hartford. In 1969, running as a Democrat, she was elected to the Board of Education and served as the first woman Chairman of the Board from 1971-1973, and from 1985-1997, she served on the Town Council. Inside and outside Town Hall, she worked with her best friends, the late Elizabeth K. Steven and Nan Lewis Glass for the betterment of the town. Over many years she served as Executive Director of West Hartford's Bicentennial Committee, co-chaired the town's Sesquicentennial Committee and served on numerous boards and committees including the Bloomfield/West Hartford Health Board, the Library Board, the pension board, and WHTV, among others. Because of her belief, energy and vision, in 1991 she dedicated a decade of her life to lobby for, plan and create the University of Hartford Magnet School. This was

her pride and joy, the true highlight of her career and one of her greatest accomplishments. She worked as a liaison to the university at the school until her retirement in 2012. Madeline's wit, courage and conviction to speak up for what she believed in was inspirational to many people. Through all her work, she was most remembered for her keen sense of humor and ability to bring levity to serious matters. Madeline was guided by her strong faith in God. She was a congregant at St. Patrick–St. Anthony Roman Catholic Church in Hartford serving as a lector, Eucharistic Minister and CCD teacher for many years. She served on the sandwich mission and spent many Saturdays serving food to the homeless at the House of Bread. Her beloved Aunt Vivian and brother Robert predecease Madeline. She is survived by her husband Edward; her daughter Mary Jo Rose, grandchildren Ricky and Shelby Armilotto of California; her daughter Anne and daughter-in-law Anne Marie and their children Maggie Elizabeth and Madeline Grace Mancini of West Hartford; her son Edward, daughter-in-law Linda and grandchildren Edward Thomas, Kellie and Nicholas of East Windsor; and relatives Sue Carol, Beth Ann and Robert Sciarroni and Marianne and David Hargrave. She took great pride in her friendships and leaves behind countless loyal and longtime friends. One of her final requests was to be certain that each and every person that enriched her life knew how grateful she was for their kindness and companionship over the years. She found peace and happiness in her last home at Chatfield and enjoyed the wonderful community there. The family is immensely appreciative of the care that her doctors and the staff at St. Francis extended to her, especially in her final days. The family will welcome friends at Molloy Funeral Home, 906 Farmington Avenue in West Hartford on Friday, February 7 from 3:00-6:00 pm. A Mass of Christian Burial will be held on February 8 at 12:00 noon at St. Patrick-St. Anthony Church, 285 Church Street in Hartford with burial directly following Mass at Fairview Cemetery in West Hartford. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to The House of Bread.



# Cemetery Details

## Fairview Cemetery

200 Whitman Ave.  
West Hartford, CT

# Previous Events

## Calling Hours

FEB 7. 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

Molloy Funeral Home  
906 Farmington Ave  
West Hartford, CT 06119  
(860) 232-1322

## Mass of Christian Burial

FEB 8. 12:00 PM (ET)

St. Patrick St. Anthony Church  
285 Church Street  
Hartford, CT

# Tribute Wall

DA

“ *I knew Madeline when I lived in Hartford years back through St.P.-St.A. and working together at the House of Bread. She was a wonderful woman and someone I truly admired. My deepest sympathies to her family. Dan Archambault*



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**Dan** - February 14, 2014 at 07:54 AM

JW

“ *To the McKernan Family, my thoughts and prayers are with you today. Thanks for being part of many fond memories of a wonderful childhood, growing up on Rumford Street. Thank You Mrs. McKernan for your services to our town. J.D. Wilcox*

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**J.D. Wilcox** - February 07, 2014 at 02:19 PM

TD

“ *My heart will be for-ever touched by Dear Maddy...  
I remember coming to the University of Hartford for my interview for the Magnet School before it opened in 2001. This was my first introduction with Maddy as she was one of the people on the interview committee. She smiled warmly at me... put me at ease... and then the questions came flying at me... the most important question I will always remember was "how and what was I going to do to make a difference in the life of a child?"  
For 13 years she held every action of mine to that question... I will continue each day with it in my mind.  
Dear Maddy became my friend, working closely together countless nights on countless projects all for the betterment of a child and their family. I remember conversations about life, education, religion, and what truly matters in a family and the world we live in. Her respect of culture and the human Spirit is an example for all to seek... outspoken yes, but her words were always true!  
In my culture we call that an Elder.  
My Friend, my Elder my fondest memories will be when we would go to Elizabeth Park sit on the park bench, eat our lunch together and solve the world!  
Maddy you have lived your Earth Journey tirelessly with love, compassion, and most of all with respect of those in need. I can only hope to live my life with the example of what you taught me...  
Dear Friend you have left your Earthly Robe and May the Grandmothers hold you Gently in their Loving arms...  
Mitakuye Oyasin  
(All My Relations)  
Terri*

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**Terri Delahanty** - February 07, 2014 at 12:25 PM

EL

“ I had heard of Madeline long before I had the privilege of meeting and working with her at the University of Hartford. She was direct, outspoken and almost always right. Her respect had to be earned, but once earned was always present; and her friendship readily available. We worked together to place UofH Student Teaching candidates at UHMS. I enjoyed my visits, looked forward to our serious talks...about everything, and will miss this remarkable lady. It will be impossible to enter that school without seeing, or at least feeling, Madeline's love, energy and warm smile. We've lost something important today.

*With sincere sympathy to her family,  
Ed Lazaroff*

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**Ed Lazaroff** - February 07, 2014 at 01:00 AM

DD

“ *To The McKernan Family*

*It was with sadness that we read of Madeline's recent passing. Her family was so important to her even as she was busy with teaching, community service of all kinds and her shining endeavor -- The University of Hartford Magnet School. She has left a lasting legacy for all to emulate. It is said that to live on in hearts one leaves behind is not to die. Madeline will live on in the hearts of her family and her many, many friends always.*

*With our most sincere sympathy,  
Gladys and Bob Dunn*

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**Dr. Mrs. Robert E. Dunn** - February 06, 2014 at 09:37 PM

LP

“ As I think of Madeline, I can only smile. What a great lady. I can't count the number of times at the Council Table when Mad would mutter something under her breath that made me laugh. Of course, she'd have a straight face and the presenter or applicant would throw me a dirty look and and Madeline would sit with a straight face and concerned aura. She made us all laugh and kept us all grounded. She was a a good friend. I am sorry I will be out of state for the services. My thoughts and prayers are with the entire family as we celebrate this wonderful life. Larry Price

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**Larry Price** - February 06, 2014 at 03:27 PM

BN

“ As representative from Hartford Public Schools developing the elementary school at the University of Hartford I have fond memories of working with Madeline McKernan  
Living in the Blue Hills neighborhood of Hartford, I frequently drive by that school and have still had opportunities to attend meetings there. Madeline left an outstanding educational institution for the young people of Hartford and surrounding communities.

*Elizabeth Brad Noel*

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**Brad Noel** - February 06, 2014 at 01:34 PM

SM

“ Mrs. McKernan was my 8th grade science teacher. I am now 68 years old, so you can understand that she obviously was very important to me to remember her all these years. Yes, she was a "hard" teacher, but underneath the no-nonsense demeanor was the twinkle in the eye and the adorable smile when she knew she had pulled one over on you. She was my inspiration to become a teacher (biology, for 26 years). I was saddened to read her obituary. The Town of West Hartford as well as the Windsor school system was the beneficiary of her wisdom. My condolences to her husband and children.

*Shirley (Bader) Murtha*

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**Shirley Murtha** - February 06, 2014 at 01:30 PM

KN

“ *Henri J.M. Nouwen, Dutch author and Catholic priest*  
*When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives mean the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand. The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not healing and face with us the reality of our powerlessness, that is a friend who cares.*

*This, for me describes dear Madeline. Yes, she had advice and solutions in many aspects of her life. However, she had that soft, wonderful ease of being totally present when (you) were with her. And of course that twinkle in her eyes was such a spark and a hint of humor.*

*The loss of a loved turns our life up side down and requires us to adjust to a "new normal".*

*I believe there is a bright star in the sky that is yours.*

*My sincere sympathy to this wonderful family who has lost a treasure, but the memories will be forever.*

*Be at peace, dear Madeline. Your work here has ended but you bring a brightness and solace to your peaceful place in Heaven.*

*Sincerely,*

*Kathy Neuhaus*

*Roseville, CA*

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**Kathy Neuhaus** - February 05, 2014 at 08:28 PM

HS

“ *We are thinking of the family who lost such a loving mom and wonderful person and we will pray for comfort and peace during this time. Memories will be in your heart forever and will sustain you.*  
*With deepest sympathy and love, Helen and Ron*

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**Helen and Ron Savino** - February 05, 2014 at 05:06 PM

MM

“ Dear Mr. McKernan, Mary Jo, Annie, and Eddie --

*Madeline was such a vibrant, influential part of West Hartford history; but in the Moore family she was also a shining example of deep smarts, humor, compassion and candor -- my parents adored her, and we all loved being in her presence. Blessings and good thoughts. I'm sure my Dad is delighted to have her company in Heaven. xo, Mary-Alice*

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**Mary-Alice Moore** - February 05, 2014 at 02:21 PM

LE

“ Dear Anne and family,  
*Even as a young kid in the backseat of the basketball carpool, I knew Madeline was a unique woman - extremely interesting, possessing a dry sense of humor and of course, feisty (in the best way!). Her legacy will live on and her memories will be lasting. With love, Lesley, Michele, Lillian and Robert*

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**lesley** - February 05, 2014 at 10:25 AM

MO

“ Dear Anne, Anne Marie, Maggie, and Grace,  
I was so sad to hear that my good friend Madeline had passed. You can be proud that one of her many legacies, the University of Hartford Magnet School, would never have been built were it not for Madeline. She worked tirelessly with the University, with CREC, and with the State Department of Education to bring the school into existence. After it opened, she then worked tirelessly for over a decade to help the school reach the level of excellence it has today. Madeline cared deeply for the children at the University of Hartford Magnet School. She was the loving grandmother that so many students sought out each day for a kind word, sage advice, or just a hug. Throughout her years, Madeline kept the school on course, always pushing for higher levels of excellence. Those of us who worked at the University of Hartford Magnet were so grateful for all she did for our students and for us. Madeline made all our lives better every single day.

With love,  
Mark O'Donnell

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**Mark O'Donnell** - February 04, 2014 at 10:16 AM

BD

“ I was fortunate to work for Madeline at The Hartford for about 7 years in the 1980s. I'll always remember her insight, warmth, sense of humor, humility and loyalty to her staff. They were among the best years of my working life.

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**Bill Davitt** - February 04, 2014 at 09:11 AM

PG

“ I was proud to call Madeline my friend. I will miss our dinners and breakfast at Effies. She was a woman of conviction and didn't care if you were the President of the United States, Governor or Mayor, if she didn't care for something she was very vocal. I loved that about her.

Peggy Gray - February 04, 2014 at 06:02 AM

BS

“ Dear Anne: Our thoughts and prayers are with you today. Your Mom was a wonderful Lady, may she rest in peace.  
Penny and Bob Skenderian  
Naples, FL

Bob & Penny Skenderian - February 04, 2014 at 05:35 AM

Caryn  
Stedman

“ Dear Anne and Anne Marie, Maggie & Grace - we are so saddened to hear of Madeline's passing. She was a great woman and an inspiration to all of us in education and public service. She had courage and humor and a true sense of what was right and just - something she passed on to you, Anne. What an amazing woman. She will be missed by her family, friend and the community. Our deepest condolences. Caryn & Seth



Caryn Stedman - February 04, 2014 at 05:04 AM

DD

“ My deepest sympathy and prayers go out to Madeline and her family. My name is Destiny and I was a caretaker for Madeline at Chatfield. Words can't express how much I'm going to miss her; when I found out about her passing I thought I'd never stop crying. She was one of my favorite residents at Chatfield and I looked forward to seeing her every Saturday morning. We had a special connection, especially since I was a past student of Arline Brick, her best friend. We had much to talk about! The day before I found out she had passed, I was just telling my mom that I had gotten the best compliment from one of the residents, and it came Madeline. She told me “Destiny, you're so nurturing and caring, you're going to make a great mother some day.” That was so kind of her to say that. That meant so much to me. We also always talked about my education journey and when I mentioned that it's kind of scary going to get my Master's degree because I'm the first in my family to get an education period, she replied so calmly saying, “that's okay, you'll be fine.” That meant so much to me as well. She was my biggest fan and a true believer that anyone can accomplish anything as long as you work hard to get it.



*I'm going to miss her humor so much as well! I can remember like it was yesterday the countless times I would be with her and she would do something clumsy and just laugh at herself and say something witty. I remember one time she didn't want to get her hair wet and I asked why and she said, “I don't want to look ugly again.” She always laughed about her hair and always wanted those volumizing styling products to just work and “stop deceiving her!” She always talked about her daughters and grandchildren to me and she was so proud of all of them. She always told me how they would take her out all the time and she enjoyed going to those swimming races that one of her grand-daughters was in too! It was funny how she said “all the girls look the same with those swimming caps on! I constantly nudged my daughter asking her which one is*

*my granddaughter, and she would say the one in the blue....but then she looks out and all of the girls are wearing blue!" It was so funny when she told me that, I loved that humor! Madeline was so humble too, I knew she had done some of those things mentioned in her obituary, but definitely not all of them. What a remarkable woman. Rest in peace Madeline, you made a footprint in my life and you were a true inspiration to me. I'll forever miss you. Love-Destiny*

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**Destiny Davis** - February 03, 2014 at 07:06 PM

DT

“ *I had only a short time to get to know Madeline. She was a delightful, kind, compassionate and wise woman. She will be missed by her Chatfield family and by her caregivers.*



*Please accept my sincere condolences.*

*Denise Talbot*

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**Denise Talbot** - February 03, 2014 at 06:27 PM

PC

“ Like many, many others, Madeline changed my life by her example, by her creation of a school that makes such a difference, by her courage and humor. She is a special hero to me, and it meant a great deal to me that her smile, jokes, stories and dedication to children and families also made her a treasured friend. I always anticipated a great conversation including a chuckle or two every time I saw her. I so looked forward to her straight forward words, the twinkle in her eye, and her encouragement.

To all of us, it is difficult to imagine a world without her and a comfort to know that she will change heaven for the better and will live on through all of us, not too far away. My prayers and thoughts go with her family, colleagues and friends. One of a kind, Madeline made our lives better.

Sincerely,

Patty Cassella

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**Patty Cassella** - February 03, 2014 at 06:11 PM

KM

I first met Madeline as a parent representative on the committee developing the University of Hartford Magnet School and later worked alongside her as a practicum student there. Without exception my experiences with her and memories of her are ones of incredible warmth, kindness, good humor, caring and cooperative nature, and exceptional generosity. I was so sorry to learn of her passing, but I know that her intelligence and remarkable spirit live on through her contributions to her family and community in countless ways. I was fortunate to have her touch my life. My prayers are with her family and friends. Madeline was truly a beautiful wonder.

Sincerely,  
Karen Mortensen

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**Karen Mortensen** - February 09, 2014 at 09:12 AM