



## Martha Bernadette Shea

October 29, 2025

Martha Bernadette Shea (McGuire), “Marty”

We had Martha to love and enjoy for 100 years, minus 48 hours. She is now, as she put it, in “the great beyond,” but also with us forever in our hearts.

Born in Longford, Ireland on October 31, 1925, Martha passed peacefully when she was ready at St. Mary Home in West Hartford, CT on October 29, 2025. Her daughter Monica Shea and son Patrick Shea were by her side as her soul transitioned to carry her beautiful spirit into the next life.

Martha grew up a farmer’s daughter, the youngest of three sisters. She trained in Ireland to care for newborn babies before emigrating to America in the 1950s, arriving in New York City aboard the RMS Mauretania after being seasick for the entire five-day journey across the Atlantic. She was immediately hired by St. Vincent’s Hospital in Manhattan as what was then called a “baby nurse.” Her photo even appeared on page 6 of The New York Times, holding the publisher’s newborn baby.

She later attended the New York University School of Dentistry’s Dental Assisting Program and lived on the Upper East Side. Martha met her future husband, John Shea, while vacationing at an Irish resort in the Catskill Mountains. The story goes that John took one look at Martha and said, “That’s the woman I’m going to marry.” They wed at St. Monica’s Church in NYC in 1960 and had two children, Monica and Patrick. The family eventually moved to East Hartford, where Martha was a devoted wife and mother. She resumed her career as a dental assistant, working for Dr. Galvin in East Hartford for

many years.

One of Martha's deepest devotions was to her Catholic faith. She became a member of St. Christopher Parish in 1966. After John's passing, Father Fanelli invited her to become a Eucharistic minister, and so began her many ministries—including serving as head of the Altar Committee. She was always willing to help her church in any way she could.

Martha was known for her infectious smile, contagious laugh, great sense of humor, and for being a thoughtful friend and neighbor. She was famous for her scones and arguably made the best potato salad in the world. A true matriarch, she hosted every Christmas and Easter well into her 80s. Fun fact: she learned to swim at age 40 and met artist Salvador Dalí several times (long story).

She is survived by her daughter Monica Shea; son Patrick Shea; daughter-in-law Jill; and two loving granddaughters, Lauren and Rachel Shea. Her connection to Ireland lives on through her niece Bertha Guilfoyle, nephews Bernard Mullooly and Peter Mullooly, and her always-thoughtful cousin Mai Lynch. She had a special bond with her only nephew to emigrate to the U.S., James Mullooly, who predeceased her. Martha's sisters Mary and Rose are reunited with her now.

The Shea family would like to extend heartfelt gratitude to St. Mary Home, where Martha was a beloved resident for the past 22 months. Her quality of life was lovingly maintained by her aides, Jane, Patricia, Diane, Natoya, Paul, Devon, Sabrina, Uvanne, and Shakira, the Recreation team, Caroline and Lilya. Special thanks also to her nurses: Fran, Oliver, Shaquena, and Celica. A special thank you to Charmagne Padua for her caring and friendship to Martha.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Thursday, November 6th at 11:00 at St. Christopher 538 Brewer St. East Hartford. Burial will follow in St. James Cemetery in Manchester.

## Cemetery Details

### **St. James Cemetery**

368 Broad St.  
Manchester, CT

## Previous Events

### **Mass of Christian Burial**

NOV 6. 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Christopher's Church  
538 Brewer  
East Hartford, CT

# Tribute Wall



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Martha Bernadette Shea.* ”



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November 04, 2025 at 01:41 PM