



Patricia A. O'Connor

September 16, 2023

Patricia. Patty. POCO. G-Ma. Aunt. Sister. Cousin. Friend. Co-worker. Neighbor. Mrs. B. Mom. Daughter. Wife. She was many things to many people, but Patricia Ann (Chenausky) O'Connor was mostly, and spectacularly our "Pat." Born August 26, 1946 in Hartford, CT to Anna Catherine (Draus) Chenausky and Peter Paul Chenausky, Sr., Pat lived most of her life in West Hartford. Her much-loved older brother, Peter Paul Chenausky, Jr., predeceased her. Pat graduated from Conard High School and went on to Elizabeth Seton College in New York.

One summer break during college, she worked in a small office on LaSalle Road and met her future mother-in-law sharing cigarettes in the bathroom. One day, she walked around West Hartford Center to buy pantyhose and ran into a young lieutenant fresh from overseas who worked in the office across the hall. The second time she ran into him that day, he asked her out to lunch. She said, "Yes, but it's Friday, so I have to have fish." He said, "I do, too!" His name was William F. O'Connor, Jr. After a lengthy correspondence composed on Seton College and O'Connor Insurance Agency stationery, the two were married on September 30, 1968. They had two kids — Kevin and Heather.

At Elizabeth Seton, she was surprised and thrilled to be tapped for — and then elected to — the student council. Her brief stint in college politics built her self-esteem, introduced her to public speaking, and instilled a lifelong

dedication to service.

In the mid-70s, Pat joined the West Hartford Housing Commission as Assistant Commissioner and campaigned for the town referenda that led to the creation of housing for the elderly at Elm Grove and Plant Junior High.

With her two kids at school, Pat returned to office work, specializing in buying raw materials to create manufactured goods and testing equipment at first at Colt Industries, then at Bauer Aerospace, and finally at OK Industries. Tapping into her family engineering heritage, she loved being able to walk a factory floor and talk to tool-and-die makers and mechanics. Later in life she became a paralegal.

Pat was an artist. She sketched pen-and-ink drawings for the St. Timothy's Cookbook that featured writing and calligraphy by her dear friends and neighbors, Dianne Sullivan and Ellen Sayers. In retirement, Pat spent her days drafting hundreds of drawings, filling up notebooks and any loose scrap of paper with her creations.

Pat was a cook. Her kitchen was her domain, where guests were invited to pull up a bar stool and confer, counsel, and laugh. She was especially known for her lemon squares.

Pat was an activist. Upon learning of the deals to sell local Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) water to a private bottling plant in Bloomfield, she became heavily involved in Save Our Water, lobbying the legislature to change state laws, calling for more transparency, and demanding additional oversight in how public utilities are governed.

Pat was a friend. An excellent listener who could also have a sharp tongue. A complete empath who really understood all the grays and shadows of feeling

and how hard it can be to live life. She had the gift of language of the heart.

She leaves behind her husband of just shy of 56 years, William. Her son Kevin (Lucas Larson) of New York, NY, daughter Heather (Larry Gottschalk) of Carrboro, NC and grandchildren Erin Gottschalk and Davis Gottschalk.

In addition, Pat leaves behind sister-in-law Linda N. Chenausky; nieces and nephews: Karen Chenausky and John, Meg, Matt, and Kathy Tansey; many grand nieces and nephews to whom she was graunt (great aunt); tons of much-loved cousins in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Florida, Vermont, Pennsylvania, and Texas among other places; and so many amazing friends from the years through Jackson Avenue, Conard High School, Elizabeth Seton College, her work life, Save Our Water, and, of course, Trotwood Drive.

Of special note are the many, many group dinners and special memories with longtime friends of the family: the Sullivans — Dianne, John, Kristin, Keith, and David; and the Wowaks — Linda, Dick, Susan, Jennifer, and Julia.

A special thank you to the hospice team of Hartford HealthCare at Home and the visiting home health aides from Seabury who held our Pat in their hearts and made the last few months of her life comfortable.

A private service will be held by the family later in the fall. In lieu of flowers, the family is suggesting donations to the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) <https://mda.donordrive.com/campaign/Patricia-A--O-Connor>.

Tribute Wall

SB

“ Pat was a beautiful and kind person. I shared time with her at book clubs, Town and County events, and many years ago at the occasional youth hockey game. But the memory that has often recurred to me in the 14 years since my husband's death (today is the anniversary of his passing) is the beautiful letter she wrote to me at the time. I often think of the line she quoted, " Tears cleanse the soul". Souls will be cleaner as many of us think of and remember Pat.

Susan Brown - October 11, 2023 at 04:50 PM

KA

“ Bill, Kevin, Heather, and Family,

We are so very sorry to hear of Pat's passing. She was a beautiful and kind person that we really only got to know not too long ago. We are grateful for her thoughtfulness in gifting the kids with books on their birthdays. Although our visits were far too short, it was always our pleasure being the meeting point for pie delivery! Sending our deepest condolences,
Katie, Dave, Nora, and Bradley Adamitis (of Windsor Locks)

Katie Adamitis - September 25, 2023 at 09:44 PM

LL

“ Pat was a wonderful listener. We shared many heartfelt moments in a spirituality woman's group. Her contributions were always so wise and encouraging. I loved visiting her cozy home and yes, the kitchen! A baker's dream. A few days before she passed I happened to find a quote she wrote to me in lovely calligraphy. "Write to know, write to be known." Always the one to encourage. I have such fond memories.

Linda Latini - September 21, 2023 at 07:28 PM

TM

“ Dear Bill and family,
Pattio (as she was fondly known in Save Our Water) brought humor, commitment, eloquence and great kindness to our work and play together. You two hosted our meetings in recent years, and Pattio always had a good treat to motivate us. When my sister was dying from ALS, Pattio sent the most articulate, beautiful notes. She really ‘got it’ and I felt so seen by her during a very dark time. She was reluctant to speak at hearings, etc. But she was so good at it. I guess her kindness is the most moving quality of many that I will miss. How lucky you all were to have her company for a lifetime. May that knowledge soften your grief over time.

Tollie Miller - September 21, 2023 at 09:25 AM

WP

“ My dear cousin Patty, after reading your wonderfully written obituary I learned so much more about you. A journey with many passions, friends and directions and a life well spent. I think, of the many things which will remind me of you in the years to come is your ‘from the gut laughter’ which made everyone around you feel good...and you often laughed at yourself with a wonderful deprecating manner. We share grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, kids and so much more. Sandra and I will miss you Patty, you take care now, you hear. Love Walter

Walter Perkins - September 20, 2023 at 09:17 PM