



Margaret Mary (O'Connor) Franzen

February 5, 1935 - December 12, 2024

Margaret Mary (O'Connor) Franzen (Peg) peacefully passed away at her granddaughter's home on 12 Dec 2024. She was preceded in death by her husband Merrill Wylie Franzen; her parents James Richard and Anna Marie O'Conner; sisters Catherine (Vincent Marien) and Alice (Russell Hulings); brother James (Sally Stoke) and Jane's husband, Jerome (Carr) McGarity. She is survived by sister Ellen Jane McGarity, and Franzen children David (Vicki), Gregory (Deborah), Elisabeth (Stephen), Anne Marie (Daniel) and Mark (Joan), 15 grandchildren, 24 great grandchildren, O'Connor cousins Kathleen Hagan, Helen Manaras; and many nieces and nephews.

Peg was born 05 February 1935 in Culbertson, Montana as the sixth and last child of James and Anna Marie O'Connor (Grant). She lived her childhood years on the O-V O'Connor ranch in the Sioux Pass region of Richland County, Montana, among her 16 cousins and siblings. Her father and three uncles: Charles (Bruge) and Leo (Walt) and Tom (Dit), homesteaded and ranched 2000 acres of Montana. Peg loved her childhood, and spent many happy days helping her dad. She was an accomplished horsewoman, and her horse Turk was her heart and best friend.

Peg attended the one-room school (district 83) on the ranch for her primary grades. At the age of 14, she reluctantly left home to board at the Academy of Holy Angels in Richfield, MN, where she later graduated High School in May,

1953. In that Sept, she entered the process to become a Roman Catholic Nun. She was a Novitiate in the sisterhood of St. Joseph of Carondelet as Sister St. Brendan, choosing the name of an Irish monk, patron saint of sailors. During that time, she attended the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul. She taught 5th grade in 1957 at St. Therese School in St. Paul, and later 7th grade at Christ the King Catholic School in MPLS from 1960 until 1964. She was an excellent pianist and vocal artist, and while still in her mid 20's, Peg was appointed the Supervisor of Music for all 54 Catholic elementary schools in Minnesota and North Dakota. In 1970, she earned her Masters in Music Education from the Univ. of Colorado, Boulder. She was a member of Christ the King Catholic Church, and very involved in the church until her last day.

In 1972, she supported the Franzen family as they experienced the illness and passing of her friend Betty. She was very close with the family, and two years later, in January of 1974, she petitioned the Holy See of the church in Rome for dispensation from her Holy Vows. Her request was granted, and she received her formal Rescript in March 1974. Margaret Mary O'Connor and Merrill Wylie Franzen were married on 26 July, 1974. They lived happily at the Franzen home in MPLS where they hosted large family gatherings.

She was an excellent cook and baker; gaining skills while a chef at Chateau Madeline in summer 1971 and as a parish chef during grad school. Peg had a beautiful garden full of flowers, vegetables and raspberries. If you visited Peg at home, you were often greeted with a fresh slice of buttered bread or a small treat, and left with a tiny bouquet. If you didn't come to her, she could be found delivering treats, flowers, and good cheer to her family, friends, and neighbors in the local area.

In Oct, 1980, she took on the role of Assistant Director of Volunteer Services at Fairview Southdale, and four years later, the Director position. She is remembered fondly by many there.

Margaret remained in the Franzen home until July 2024, when her health began to fail. In her last months, the true impact of her life could be observed in the near constant stream of visitors who came to hold her hand, sing, and tell stories of how she supported and cheered them. She made so many feel heard, valued, safe, appreciated, and special. Now, safely in the hands of God, her first two things to do are: hug Merrill and jump on Turk to ride like the wind.

Margaret's mass will be conducted at 11 AM on 24 January, 2025 at Christ the King, Catholic Church in Minneapolis. A luncheon will follow the service. In the spring, she will be buried at Calvary Cemetery, 753 Front Ave, St Paul in the O'Connor family plot next to sister Catherine.

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN 24. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Christ The King Catholic Church
5029 Zenith Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55410

Memorial Service

JAN 24. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Christ The King Catholic Church
5029 Zenith Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55410

Tribute Wall



“ Washburn-McReavy Funeral Chapels created a Memorial Service for Margeret Mary Franzen in memory of Margaret Mary (O'Connor) Franzen



Washburn-McReavy - January 15, 2025 at 10:29 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Margaret Mary (O'Connor) Franzen.

February 10, 2025 at 11:23 AM



“ Sandra J. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Margaret Mary (O'Connor) Franzen.

Sandra J. - January 24, 2025 at 02:58 PM



“ Mary O. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Margaret Mary (O'Connor) Franzen.

Mary O. - January 19, 2025 at 11:32 PM

TF

“ *The Purvey Family planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Margaret Mary (O'Connor) Franzen.*

The Purvey Family - January 16, 2025 at 09:38 AM

CM

“ *Those of us who were her 7th grade students knew that she loved us.*

And we loved her.

Charles McCoy - January 08, 2025 at 09:59 AM

PC

“ *What a beautiful remembrance of my Aunt Peggy. I remember her visiting us and marveling that nuns wore swimming suits and played in pools. I remember her wise counsel when frustrated. I remember her and Merrill welcoming me as a traveler when Aunt Katy didn't snag me first. I remember her fierce love and her flashing intense gaze. I loved being the 'little Peg' and her namesake. She paid attention, always. I am so glad you had your last few months in Angie's tender care and for the love your Franzen family showered on you when your O'Connor bunch couldn't be there. We love you so and are glad you are no longer in pain. Keep us on your prayers Aunt Peg. Hope to see you again in the fullness of times*

Peg Crane - January 04, 2025 at 10:19 PM

MS

What a great tribute to Peg. She was INVOLVED!! What an accomplished person she was. My first memories of her are when we played softball on the ranch and she and her nun friends played too! They were in full habit, with their rosary beads flying behind them as they ran the bases!! Peg was always so good to me. She loved talking to me about my cows on my farm! She loved ranching and told great stories about moving their cows to summer pasture. She was such a support to me when I lost my husband Jim, and always remembered to offer prayers for him and our family on his death anniversary, and contact me on that day. She made everyone feel like the most important person alive. Thank you Franzen family for caring for Peg and loving her in her last days. God bless her with eternal happiness with Him!

Mary Stepler - January 05, 2025 at 08:18 PM

AT

All of "Sister Peggy's" Nativity students will fondly remember "locking in" for her before we began the Christmas program.

Anne Culligan Toal - February 12, 2025 at 09:40 PM