

Mary Darlene Hegarty (Autey)

July 27, 1937 - March 26, 2025

Mary Darlene Hegarty (Autey) née McCloud, widow of David Autey Jr., James Rader, and David Hegarty, passed away peacefully on March 26, 2025, in Largo, Florida. Born on July 27, 1937, Mary lived a life filled with love, adventure, and resilience.

Mary had a warm smile and a gift for uplifting those around her. She was a source of encouragement, always ready to offer support and be a steadfast cheerleader for her family and friends.

Early Life and Career

Mary grew up in South Minneapolis with her parents and older sister. As a child, she was fascinated by shoes, cutting pictures from magazines and dreaming of trying them on. She also treasured her collection of handsewn stuffed bears, lovingly made by her mother.

She attended St. Helena’s Catholic School and graduated from Roosevelt High School in 1955. Soon after, she began her career as a secretary to the president of Minnehaha First National Bank.

Family and Community

In 1956, Mary met David Autey, and after a whirlwind seven-week engagement, they married in 1957. Together, they raised four children—two daughters and two sons—creating a home filled with love and laughter. Their family adventures included camping trips in their travel trailer, making cherished memories along the way.

A devoted stay-at-home mother, Mary was actively involved in St. Alphonsus Catholic Church, singing in the choir (even performing for the Pope), teaching religious education, and leading discussion groups.

Mary's generosity extended beyond her immediate family. She and Dave Autey volunteered at Trevilla of Robbinsdale, a facility for young adults with physical and mental challenges. They formed a special bond with a young man named Phil, who became like family.

Professional Life

As her children grew older, Mary re-entered the workforce, taking a part-time role at Dayton's department store before becoming an executive assistant at the Minnesota Press Club. Later, she joined General Mills, where she worked as a tour guide in the Betty Crocker Kitchens before moving to Consumer Services. She also became the official respondent for the nationally syndicated "Dear Betty" column, dedicating 25 years to the company before retiring.

Later Years and Love Found Again

After Dave Autey's passing in 2000, Mary found love again. In 2003, she met Jim Rader through Catholic Singles online. They married and moved to Summerfield, Florida, sharing a happy but brief life together before Jim's sudden passing less than two years later.

Despite her loss, Mary found strength in friendships, founding the Sociable Singles Club and even joining a lip-syncing performance group called the "Kopy Kats."

Believing she was meant to be a wife, Mary went back online with Catholics Connect and met and married Dave Hegarty, a widower with 16 adult children. Together, they built a faith-filled life in Florida, participating in a Small Christian Community, Bible studies and coordinating a Spiritual Friendship Group for young adults with mental and physical challenges.

A Life Well Lived

After Dave Hegarty's passing just weeks after they moved into assisted living, Mary leaned on her faith, family, and friends. She later relocated to St. Petersburg, Florida, to be closer to her daughter.

Legacy

Mary is survived by daughter Mary (John) Vanderheyden, son Steve (Diane) Autey,

daughter Linda (Tim) Cole and son Dan (Lisa) Autey; grandchildren Joel (Sarah), Bridget (Brad), Anne (Jonathan), Jacob (Emily), Rachel (Santiago), Casey, Brandon, Adam (Allison), Danielle, Jade and Tanner; and 16 great-grandchildren. Mary is also survived by her extended relatives and the loving families of her late husbands David Autey Jr., James Rader and David Hegarty along with many cherished friends. Mary leaves a legacy of kindness, faith, and unwavering optimism. She will be deeply missed but forever remembered by those who knew and loved her.

Celebration of Life

A Celebration of Life service will be held on Wednesday, April 9, 2025 at **St. Alphonsus Catholic Church**, 7025 Halifax Avenue North, Brooklyn Center, MN. Reviewal will take place from **10:00 to 11:00am**, followed by a **Mass of Christian Burial**.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to TanzaniaLifeProject.org to help bring clean water to people living in remote villages in Tanzania.

Visitation

Wednesday, April 9th 10-11AM

St. Alphonsus Catholic Church, 7025 Halifax Ave N., Brooklyn Center, MN

Driving Directions

Mass of Christian Burial

Wednesday, April 9th 11AM

St. Alphonsus Catholic Church, 7025 Halifax Ave N., Brooklyn Center, MN

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