

Mary Lou Russell

6/25/1934 - 9/3/2025



Mary Russell, 91, died peacefully Wednesday, Sept. 3, 2025, surrounded by her loving family, with her faithful husband of 68 years, Gene, by her side. She was the love of his life since they met in St. Louis 70 years ago.

Mary, born June 25, 1934, in Louisiana, was one of seven children born to Ruth Lovrien Conner and Harold "Lewis" Conner. With her parents and siblings she lived in towns throughout Iowa and Nebraska. At a young age, she contracted polio and determined to become a nurse, a profession that she attained after obtaining a nursing degree from Mercy Hospital School of Nursing in Burlington, Iowa. At one point in her training during the '50s, she was assigned as a personal care nurse for a patient confined to an iron lung as a result of polio, bringing her full circle to the deep empathy and professional aspirations she developed as a child.

She supported her husband as he worked to attain three degrees while raising 10 children and working full time as an R.N., with primary assignments in the departments of labor and delivery, orthopedics, and pediatrics. She worked in hospitals in Missouri, Iowa, California, Indiana, and Kansas, and retired from St. Mary's hospital (now Via Christi) in Manhattan after 20 years, where she assisted with many deliveries.

She loved her children unconditionally, and sparked a love of reading, music and education, delighted to see all 10 had received four-year college degrees under her guidance and encouragement. She especially welcomed with excitement her 37 grandchildren, and attended several of their births. Their visits, and the visits of her 21 great grandchildren into her home, filled her with joy. Her sharp wit, even to the end, brought a smile to everyone who knew her.

In addition to her husband, Dr. Eugene Russell Sr., Mary is survived by her children: Dr. Theresa Russell-Loretz (Jim Loretz Jr.) of Lancaster, PA; Jan McCloskey (Jamie) of Gainesville, FL; Eugene Russell Jr. (Terri Lindsay Russell) of Shawnee; Anna Henderson (Dr. Kevin) of Topeka; Ruth Russell of Rochester, NY; Julie Russell (Dr. Charles Kipp), Riley; Susan Schmaderer (Tim) of Overland Park; Paul Russell (Dr. Heather Russell) of Nevada, MO; Carol Russell (Todd Sorensen) of Tiffin, Iowa; Cecilia Russell (Dave Schneider) of Milford; along with 37 grandchildren, and 21 great grandchildren, including the youngest great grandchild born this week.

Mass of Christian Burial will be 10:30 A.M., Monday, September 15, 2025 at St. Thomas More Catholic Church in Manhattan.

Visitation will be the Monday prior from 6:00 P.M. to 7:30 P.M., September 8, 2025, with a Parish Vigil following immediately after at Yorgensen-Meloan-Londeen Funeral Home.

Memorial Contributions may be made to Colorectal Cancer Alliance in care of Yorgensen-Meloan-Londeen Funeral Home, 1616 Poyntz Ave, Manhattan, Kansas 66502