



Mary Ellen Gram

April 26, 1935 - March 15, 2025

Mary Ellen (Hrivnak) Gram died peacefully on Saturday, March 15, 2025 in Libertyville, IL. Mary was born April 26, 1935 in Chicago to George and Susan Hrivnak. After her mother's death, Mary was raised in Berwyn & Riverside, IL by her dear grandmother, Susanna Chlapecka Machalek & her maternal aunt and uncle, Anne and Andy Spalek.

Mary graduated from Riverside/Brookfield High School in 1952 and Northern Illinois State Teachers' College in 1956, from where she received a B.S. in Education and was a member of Delta Zeta sorority, from which she formed decades long friendships. At NIU, she met the love of her life, fellow teacher James "Jim" Gram, who taught and coached at Lake Forest (IL) High School for 40 years. They married August 18, 1957 at Berwyn United Lutheran Church.

Mary enjoyed teaching at Little Fort Elementary School, Waukegan, IL and in the Lake Bluff, IL school district, but then was most pleased for many years to lovingly raise her and Jim's three daughters in Lake Bluff. An avid reader and natural teacher, she also happily tutored many neighborhood children and volunteered as a local and regional Girl Scout leader and West School room mother for her girls. Until 2016, Mary was very active in local politics as a Republican Precinct Committeeman, Lake County Trustee and president of the Women's Republican Club of Lake Forest/Lake Bluff. She made many

friends through the Lake Bluff Women's Club. Mary very much enjoyed her 20 years working with students, staff and faculty as Assistant Registrar at Lake Forest College, Lake Forest, IL. Mary's strong faith was evident in her 62 years of active membership at St. James Lutheran Church, Lake Forest, IL where she served as a Sunday School teacher, Lutheran Church Women president and district leader, Prayer Group co-founder and Sewing Group member. Mary and Jim had great friends from the neighborhood, their schools' faculties, their poker card group and from St. James Lutheran Church. They enjoyed traveling, especially to visit family in California, Canada, Florida and Europe.

After Jim's death in 2008, Mary enjoyed countless special times with her growing family.

She cheerfully attended as many of her seven grandkids' dance recitals, band/choir concerts, sports events and theater productions as she could; her trips with the family to Disney World, New York, Florida, Canada and Washington, D.C. were memorable. Mary was always excited to visit her grandkids at college/university and she was so proud of each of them as they earned their degrees. She cherished her three great-grandchildren. Mary's family was the most important part of her life.

Mary is preceded in death by her husband, parents, and brothers George, John and Eugene Hrivnak (who both died in childhood). She is survived by her three daughters Rev. Sue Ellen (Rev. Richard) Grudt, Catherine (Donald) Morrison, Amy (Steve) Fazekas, grandchildren Nina (Nathan) Gevelinger, Benjamin (Natalie Kramer) Grudt, Joseph Grudt, Jacqueline Morrison, Alison (Max) Hilton, Magdalena (Brandon) Melody and Marianna Fazekas, great grandchildren Samuel and Maximilian Gevelinger and Sophie Hilton; many cousins and friends-all miss her very much.

A visitation for Mary will be held from 10 a.m. until the time of the Memorial

Service, which will begin at 11:00 a.m. on Friday, May 16, 2025, at St. James Lutheran Church, 1380 N. Waukegan Road, Lake Forest, Illinois, with Rev. Amy Gillespie officiating. The service will be livestreamed and available the morning of the service at <https://www.stjameslutheran.org/livestream>. Internment will be private.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made in Mary's honor to Saint James Lutheran Church.

Arrangements are through Reuland and Turnbough Funeral Directors of Lake Forest (847) 234-9649 or RTfunerals.com.

Cemetery Details

Lake Forest Cemetery

1525 N. Lake Road
Lake Forest, IL 60045
(847) 615-4341

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 16. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

St. James Lutheran Church
1380 North Waukegan Road
Lake Forest, IL 60045

Memorial Service

MAY 16. 11:00 AM (CT)

St. James Lutheran Church
1380 North Waukegan Road
Lake Forest, IL 60045

Tribute Wall



“ *Reuland & Turnbough Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Mary Ellen Gram*



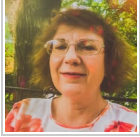
Reuland & Turnbough Funeral Directors of Lake Forest - May 22, 2025 at 11:04 AM



“ *Reuland & Turnbough Funeral Home created a Service Livestream in memory of Mary Ellen Gram*



Reuland & Turnbough Funeral Directors of Lake Forest - March 27, 2025 at 10:59 AM



“ I will always be grateful for the tutoring I received from Mrs. Gram in elementary school. I enjoyed the one on one English lessons and she helped boost my confidence. I have so many wonderful memories of learning with both Mr. and Mrs. Gram. They always made class fun. Amy, I also have fond memories of you and our years in school together. I am sorry I can't be in town for the services, but my prayers are with you and your family. Love, Tammy Graham

Tammy Graham - March 28, 2025 at 09:29 AM

SG

*Tammy-what a lovely tribute to our mom!
Thank you so much for taking the time to write to us-we truly appreciate your thoughtfulness. Mom always spoke so highly of you and your family.
Love from Sue, Cathy and Amy*

Sue Grudt - April 25, 2025 at 02:41 PM