



# Doretta Mary Riley

AUG 8, 1925 - OCT 29, 2022



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# Doretta Mary Riley

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**D**oretta Mary McNally Riley was born in Sauk Centre Minnesota on August 8 th 1925 to Elizabeth and Ralph McNally. She died peacefully at her home of 55 years on October 29 th 2022. Doretta was the loving mother of Maureen, Sean, Brian and Sheila and her husband Miles. She was the doting grandma of Jacqueline, Laura and Grant. Doretta was the oldest of four children, her brothers Ralph, Johnny, and sister Mary preceded her in death. She said her earliest memory was of swinging back and forth on the front porch listening to the strains of “Keep Your Sunny Side Up” coming from the radio inside. Doretta attended St. Mark’s, St. Joseph’s Academy and the College of St. Catherine. Her first job was with the Beck School of Radio and later the Twin Cities Television Lab. Doretta met her husband Bill at a party in January of 1949 and they were engaged a month later and married in October honeymooning in Chicago. Daughter Maureen came along in 1951 and Sean in 1953. Bill was working for Minnesota Mutual Life Insurance and was transferred to the San Francisco office in 1954-California here we come! Doretta said that she gave her fur lined boots to her mother in law at the airport because she knew she would have no use for them in sunny California. Bill and Doretta lived in an apartment in Oakland for about six weeks while their home was being built in



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Fiesta Gardens in San Mateo. After moving in, Doretta gave a Tupperware party and invited everyone on the block not knowing that those who came ended up being life-long friends. Doretta was also President of the Newcomers Club in San Mateo. From there she formed a potluck and bridge group. In 1956 Bill and Doretta auditioned for the St. Gregory's Theatre Guild expanding their social network. The Theatre Guild was a big part of their lives for nearly 30 years. St. Gregory's Church was a special place for Doretta. She was active in the Women's Club, Liturgy Committee, church choir, and also taught Catechism after school. In the early 80's, St. Gregory's made some structural changes to the church and Doretta ended up with her very own church pew which went into the seating area of her kitchen. Doretta broke the barrier a bit at church and became the first female lector and female Eucharistic minister. Brian came along in 1957 and Sheila in 1962. It was in 1968 that the Riley's bought a house on Alameda de las Pulgas. It was a bigger house and Doretta decided to get a part time job so she could make some money to buy more furniture. She worked in the customer service department at Sears for 15 years but always referred to it as the "complaint" department. Her husband Bill was diagnosed with cancer in October of 1984 and died six weeks later. On a cruise with Maureen, Sean and Brian, Doretta met Ray Johnson. Ray was from a small village in England. He loved music and dancing-a perfect match. Ray and Doretta married a year later and split their time between Hurworth



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and San Mateo.

During their marriage they played host to many family members and friends. They also traveled quite a

bit visiting Yugoslavia, Italy, France, Austria and Germany and many other places along the way. Mom

expanded her family with Ray's son Paul and wife Liz along with their daughter Clare and husband

Steven and their children Max and Eleanor. Ray passed away in 2011. Doretta remained active at St.

Gregory's attending daily mass and joining her dear friend Patt and other friends for coffee afterwards.

Doretta had a great sense of humor, was a fantastic storyteller and an incredible hostess although more

comfortable with a skilsaw than a pot roast! She was always upbeat and never had a cruel word to say

about anyone. She was an absolute treasure and we were lucky to have her.

Thank you to mom's caregiver Sonia and to the wonderful hospice team Arlen, Lloyd and Emily. If you

would like to make a contribution in Doretta's name she was a supporter of St. Anthony's Dining Room

and Second Harvest.

We are planning a celebration of Doretta's life in the New Year.





# Events

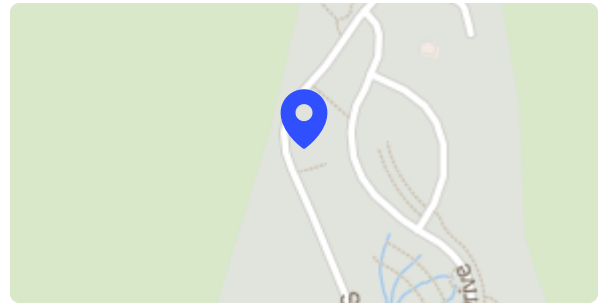
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## Cemetery Details

 **Skylawn Funeral Home & Memorial Park**  
100 Lifemark Rd, San Mateo CA 94062-4592

 **(650) 437-1986**





## **Memories only last if you share them**

Join us in honoring Doretta by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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