



Mary Alice Murphy

June 15, 1931 - February 19, 2025

Mary Alice Murphy, 93, Topeka, Kansas, former assistant to the White House Presidential Press Secretary, passed away Wednesday, February 19, 2025.

Mary Alice was born on June 15, 1931, in Joplin, Missouri, to Richard Henry and Mary Edna (Noll) Passman. The family moved to Topeka when she was three years old. She was educated at Holy Name Grade School, Hayden High School, majored in music at St. Mary College, Leavenworth and attended Clark's School of Business. Mary Alice worked as a secretary in various companies, then was employed by Congressman, and later, Governor William Avery, Congressman Larry Winn and then White House Presidential Press Secretary Ronald Ziegler.

In 1971, Mary Alice and John "Kevin" Murphy were married. They lived in New York City and traveled extensively in the U.S. and internationally with Kevin's business. The couple moved to Dallas, back to New York and finally back to Topeka in 1990. Here, Mary Alice served on the boards of St. Francis Hospital, the Topeka Symphony and Washburn Alumni Association.

Her beloved Kevin died July 15, 2019. She was also preceded in death by her parents, sisters, Elizabeth Keys and Martha Evans, and brother, Richard Henry Passman, Jr.

Mary Alice is survived by step-daughter Elizabeth Murphy Phelan; step-grandson Kevin Murphy; and numerous, cherished nieces and nephews.

Family will greet friends from 5 p.m. until 6 p.m. Monday, February 24, at Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home, 2801 SW Urish Road, Topeka KS 66614, where the rosary will be prayed at 6 p.m. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11 a.m. Tuesday, February 25, at Most Pure Heart of Mary Church. Burial will follow in Mount Calvary Cemetery.

Memorial contributions are suggested to Most Pure Heart of Mary Church sent in care of the funeral home.

Condolences may be sent online to www.kevinbrennanfamily.com.

Cemetery Details

Mount Calvary Cemetery

801 SW Westchester Rd
Topeka, KS 66606

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB 24. 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM (CT)

Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home
2801 SW Urish Road
Topeka, KS 66614
(785) 272-7888
info@kevinbrennanfamily.com

Rosary

FEB 24. 6:00 PM (CT)

Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home
2801 SW Urish Road
Topeka, KS 66614
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info@kevinbrennanfamily.com

Mass of Christian Burial

FEB **25**. 11:00 AM (CT)

Most Pure Heart of Mary Church
3601 SW 17th Street
Topeka, KS 66604

Tribute Wall

RM

“*Mary Alice was one of the most elegant women we have ever known. We first met her and Kevin soon after we moved to Topeka and stayed friends after we moved back to Des Moines in 2017. Our in-person visits every few months and our at-least weekly phone calls filled us in on the news of Topeka, but even more importantly, invited us into the magic of her life. When she said, "Have I ever told you about ..." we knew we were in for a wonderful story. And as she relayed the tale to us, she punctuated the telling with her contagious giggle that included us in the joy she derived from the event and the reliving of it. We had no idea the conversation we had with her two days before her passing would be our last, but that conversation was a wonderful last chat, filled with her amusement of the world around her. She was sharp as a tack to the very end and kept us all on our toes. We already miss her so much. We love you, Mary Alice.*

Craig and Robin Maxon

Robin and Craig Maxon - March 05, 2025 at 04:03 PM

MM

I met Mary Alice in 1989/1990 when I went to work for her husband Kevin. I continue to work for Kevin full-time in the office and then when he retired another 12 years at home and became very close friends with Mary Alice as well as Kevin. She was a delight to know and we spoke often. she was always concerned With my life as I was with hers, so we checked on each other often and I feel badly that the last time I spoke with her, I had gone down to Utah to be with my husband who had passed on January 12 just three days after returning home. I got busy with his celebration of life and visitation the next month which was only two days after her burial and I feel terrible that I never checked up on her, but I was so busy with what was going on my own life. I figured I would hear from her soon. There is no worries and then life got in the way and I didn't hear from her and I didn't follow up with a phone call and I feel horrible that the last time I talked to her was in January. We always had a great conversation, caught up on world events and personal struggles or triumph, and I treasured our friendship these many many years. I am heartbroken to hear of her passing. She was my sounding board as I was hers, and she was my biggest cheerleader when I was going through Breast cancer and was just a wonderful wonderful friend to me despite 23 years in our age difference, but it was like she was my big sister and my mama all rolled into one. I miss her dearly and my heart is so sad at hearing this news, but I know she is rejoicing to be with "Himself" as she used to call him. She had a very solitary existence the last few years, despite my efforts to get her out and take her somewhere take her out to eat. She was content to stay at home. I miss you and love you, Mary Alice with all my heart. David was your sweetie too and always enjoyed when I would give him a hug and a big smooch from you per your request. It always made him smile. I wish you could've seen him, but I knew that wasn't possible.

Marla Marlow - May 30, 2025 at 10:23 PM

JB

“*Mary Alice was beauty, elegance, grace, and charm with a rich life she shared with us. She met Popes and Presidents and cherished those memories as we now cherish and love our memories of Mary Alice. We were fortunate to be her and Kevin's neighbors. She was a once-in-a-lifetime treasure for us. We express our deepest sympathy to her beloved family. We are saddened by the loss of such a wonderful woman but thankful for the richness, warmth, and kindness she brought to our lives. Jack and Jan Brier*

Jack Brier - February 21, 2025 at 11:17 AM

HM

“*Mary Alice was one of a kind. I was blessed to have known her since 2011 - If I couldn't make it to meet / see her in person, we talked every two weeks on the phone, even if it was just a quick hello and thinking of you. Truly, one of the most incredible women I have ever met. I was blessed to have been her friend and had opportunities to know more about her life. I will miss this dear friend who loved me and loved my family so well. Thank you, Mary Alice, for all the things you did to help others, even in the littlest ways. Love and prayers to all the family, especially the Evans / Sutherlands.*

Holly Myers - February 21, 2025 at 08:40 AM