



Mary F. Wright

January 25, 1941 - November 15, 2021

Mary Frances (Biekkola) Wright passed away on November 15, 2021 at the Bayside Village in L'Anse, where she had been a resident since 2019.

She was born in L'Anse on January 25, 1941, the daughter of the late George Frederick (GF), Sr. and Julia Genevive (McNamara) Biekkola. She graduated from L'Anse High School in 1959 as Class President and after graduation, attended the College of St. Scholastica, University of Wisconsin, Madison and Northern Michigan University where she received a teaching degree and two Master's Degrees. Mary was a teacher and principal in various communities, living as a nomad, from a log cabin in Trenary, then Marquette, Hancock, and back to L'Anse. Later in her life, she was very active with community art projects throughout the state. Mary received the Governor's Arts Award in 1999. One of her largest projects was "Finn Fest USA" which celebrates Finnish culture. In 1996, over 3,000 painted chairs and seating of all kind were displayed in and around the Superior Dome in Marquette under her direction. She promoted chairs of all sizes and styles being painted by individuals in the traditional Finnish blue and white colors by offering work bees in many UP communities. Other projects included; Story Lines – Yoopera!, where family photos and stories were displayed on a cloth banner and hung on a clothesline, Heritage Poles displaying photos and stories lined the bike path in Marquette's Mattson Lower Harbor for their Sesquicentennial Celebration, Grandma Doors, Decorative shovels lining M-28, Mitten Project in the Copper Country and lastly the Sunflower Project to celebrate women's suffrage.

Mary is survived by several nieces, nephews and cousins. She was preceded in death by her parents, sister Anna Mae (Bill) Johnson, brothers, George (Fred), Jr. and William Martin (Sandra) Biekkola.

Graveside services for Mary will be held in the spring in the L'Anse Evergreen Cemetery. The date and time will be announced then.

The family would like to thank everyone that so graciously contributed to Mary's funeral

expenses.

Cemetery

Evergreen Cemetery

L'Anse, MI, 49946

Comments



“ I had the privilege of being acquainted with Mary for the last 5 or so years. She was a bright beacon of inspiration for me. I feel grateful to have heard her uplifting and loving words as she encouraged me through several big life events. She shared with me stories of inventive projects she created on a regular basis, and I could tell she brought joy and humor to those around her. She had a sense of humor that helped me make light of difficult situations. She was an inspiration to me, and I'm so grateful to have had the privilege to call her friend.



Jennifer R - December 18, 2021 at 08:30 AM



“ I am Mary's step-daughter, Ruthanne Wright Price. I love this pic of her and my dad Earl Wright.



Ruthanne Wright Price - December 02, 2021 at 12:47 PM



“ Mary was my friend and support. For the last 7 years we have talked to each other almost every day. She had many health struggles, as do I, and her constant positive attitude often helped to cheer me on the darker days. Her creativity and strength encouraged my art as well. I miss her, though I still hear her voice. Adios, my dear.

Sara K - November 22, 2021 at 11:07 AM



“ Mary was a cousin of mine (her mother Julia and my Dad, Marty, we're siblings) and although we didn't see each other much, she taught me much. I admired her independent voice and her artistic talent and skills. I remember another art project she was involved in: she was commissioned to decorate the National Christmas tree in Washington DC. She travelled to schools across Michigan and had students make ornaments from the natural materials in their area. She travelled to Beaver Island and included our K-12 students in the project. I remember how proud our students were to know their ornaments were on the National Christmas tree. My sister Nan, brother Theo and I met with Mary in August of this year and she shared important McNamara family history with us. Godspeed Mary.

Kathleen McNamara - November 20, 2021 at 10:34 AM



“ Mary also did a project at the Peter White public library. We had pieces of wood and you picked a book to paint the cover of the book on it. My children and I did that project. Mary was so fun to work with. Rest In Peace and May perpetual light shine upon her. My condolences to Mary's family and friends

linda holtz - November 20, 2021 at 09:40 AM



“ 12 files added to the album Memories Album



Reid Funeral Service & Chapel - November 19, 2021 at 01:35 PM



“ Mary always encouraged me to do my art. I valued her presence in my life. She was a dynamic, creative force in our corner of the world. She stayed with me when she came to the Sault for Finn Fest in Sault Ontario. She was a lot of fun ! She had lost a lot of weight and would cook up her meal each evening- fascinating. She will be missed.

Anna Hubbard - November 19, 2021 at 10:37 AM



“ 8 files added to the album Memories Album



Reid Funeral Service & Chapel - November 19, 2021 at 09:51 AM



“ Nothing but positive memories of Mary, free thinking and widely humorous. Thoughts of love and appreciation esp for your family. Thank you for introducing us to community art. You were the Godmother of Mqt's Cultural Revolution. Rest Proud.

tonja - November 19, 2021 at 12:09 PM



“ Mary was like a fairy god aunt to me when I was 15 and took me into her home until I was 16. We lived together for 1 full year. She taught me how to drive a stick shift. I left the stove on burnt and shattered the bottom out of her glass tea pot, only she would have a glass one, in the middle of her museum. She taught me manners, was so kind and loving. Her hugs were soft and squishy, and she hugged like she did everything without worrying if she was 'too much' for anyone or any place. When I think of her I can smell rose oil, see her wild red lipstick, fur lined hood on her parka where her face barley poked out, mittens, snow boots. I can hear her excitement in her vibrant voice that made all sorts of noises that weren't always words, just pure joy and energy. Thanks for teaching me about love and life and how to think of others-I get it now so much deeper. I still think of the lessons I learned from you. She was a true friend and blessing to me. I don't know where I would be without that year under her wing. But she certainly taught everyone to live every moment despite any of the bad things that could happen. And to love yourself and others and following your passions and making a mess was ok. Never forget your laugh, love, bounce in your step, acceptance of shortcomings, fabulous earrings, free spirit. God speed beautiful Lady with the Flowers.

jessie - November 18, 2021 at 11:06 PM



“ Mary was a force who set great examples of how to turn an idea into a reality. She had a fabulous sense of style, that was all her own. I will miss so many things about her. Godspeed Mary

Mary Jo Stimac



Mary Jo Stimac - November 18, 2021 at 05:45 PM



“ So sad to hear of Mary passing. She did so much for the community and others. she always had positive things to say about me and had my back. I'll miss her

Deano trost - November 18, 2021 at 04:00 PM



“ I wrote this song for us to sing to Mary at a birthday party given by Carol Ekstrom in 2016. She loved it.

MARY WRIGHT

All day all night Mary Wright
She's making art big and bright, Mary Wright
Everyone in Keweenaw loves Mary Wright,
And her art so big and bright, Mary Wright.

Grandma doors, set outdoors, Mary Wright
Great Blue chairs, some on stairs, Mary Wright
Everyone in Keweenaw loves Mary Wright
And her art so big and bright, Mary Wright

Mittens galore by every store, Mary Wright
Story line a tale divine, Mary Wright
Everyone in Keweenaw loves Mary Wright
And her art so big and bright, Mary Wright

She loved it .Sometimes she'd start humming it, or singing it when we'd meet in subsequent years. There is none to compare with her big imagination of what could be.

Linda Belote - November 18, 2021 at 03:34 PM



“ Love it!

Ruthanne Wright Price - December 02, 2021 at 12:40 PM



“ Mary was a "Force" who made the world more beautiful and better. We always complemented each other on our "outfits" and had many smiles for each other. She made a significant and unique impact on the world and we're all better for having her in our community and lives.

She will be missed but her 'force' will live on
Nancy Byers Sprague

Nancy Byers Sprague - November 18, 2021 at 02:58 PM



“ I loved Mary's style - her clothes, her jewelry, her hats, her smile, her friendly warm greetings - all BIG, BOLD and BEAUTIFUL! She leaves behind a wonderful memory. Rest easy, Mary.

Pushpa Murthy - November 18, 2021 at 02:52 PM



“ Mary Biekkola Wright was a terrific artist, very creative, and a woman who could get things done. She was a force of nature. Thank you Mary for the positive events you created in the Western and Central UP, in Michigan, and beyond. You have left a wonderful legacy.

Faith Morrison - November 18, 2021 at 02:30 PM



“ Our condolences to your family. Mary was a teacher and a friend, whose creative force gifted so many communities. She will be missed. ~Loriann and Joseph Lyons

Loriann Lyons - November 17, 2021 at 02:48 PM



“ Mary was a great conceptual artist, a friend of mine said "this world needs more Mary Wrights" I agree. Classmate and sharer of birthdays. . .

Rik Moilanen - November 17, 2021 at 12:19 PM



“ Mary was my neighbor in Madison WI in the early 70's. She told me she had some land in the UP. I had never been there. Mary, my son and me hitchhiked up here. We went to her land in Diffin. She met Earl and the history began. When we hitchhiked here that day we got a ride with a couple of guys running pot to da UP. Years later when I was hitchhiking here I got a ride with the same guys.

Natalie J Thares - November 17, 2021 at 08:44 AM



“ Mary was an amazing woman, I enjoyed talking to her.
She had a wealth of knowledge and she would always make my day. Rest easy

Tanya schjoth - November 16, 2021 at 08:05 PM