



Mrs. Mary Westberg

December 24, 1924 - January 28, 2021

Beloved wife of the late Kenneth Westberg; Loving mother of John Westberg and Lynn (Michael) Harczak; Fond grandmother of Crystal (Joseph) Parenti and Michael (Stephanie) Harczak; Fond great grandmother of Liliana and Leo Parenti; Dear sister of the late Catherine Santiago and the late Ralph Holmes; Loving aunt, cousin, and friend of many. Family and friends to meet Monday, February 1, at St. Eugene Church, 7958 W. Foster Avenue, for 10:30 Mass. Interment Maryhill Cemetery.

Acquaintances recognized her as the pretty lady with the perpetual smile on her face. It was a wonderful smile which immediately endeared people to her and caused them to smile back. Mom used to say, "It takes more muscles to frown than to smile."

Her family, however, loved her for much more than what was visible from first glance. We knew that we were truly blessed to have a mom who honored God and who was peaceful, compassionate, encouraging, patient and loving to everyone. She was little in stature but mighty in nature as you'll be able to discern by the following ten facts that you might not know about our mother Mary Josephine Victoria Matranga Westberg.

Fact # 1: Mom loved with a heart of gold and would do anything for the people she loved. When my parents were first married and lived in the old neighborhood of Ohio and Ashland, they were walking down the street on a dark summer night and were approached by three thugs whose intentions were to beat upon Dad and steal his wallet while the third man would hold Mom out of the way. Mom saw how one man seized Dad from the back while the other man began to punch him. To the great surprise of these three guys, Mom sprang into action, kicking, scratching, and swinging punches.

With this, the third man called off the other two thugs by saying, "Let him go. If this lady is willing to fight for this man with everything she's got, he must be a great guy." The three thugs ran into the alley never to be seen again without Dad's wallet.

Fact # 2: Her goal in life was to bring pleasure to those she loved and to make people feel good about themselves-even strangers. Once when we were grocery shopping together, I saw her having a conversation with a young man in his early thirties. The man was laughing out loud as my mother was talking to him. When Mom walked back to our cart, I asked her what she could have possibly said to make a complete stranger laugh so hard like this. Mom replied, "I told him that he looked like one of the characters from the Seinfeld sitcom." When the stranger asked Mom which actor would that be, she answered, "The handsome one."

Fact # 3: Her outgoing nature extended to everyone she met. Even the Salvation Army volunteer bell ringers outside Jewel Osco were on a first name basis with her. Mom's friendliness could be attributed to the fact that she grew up in a neighborhood where people talked to one another-where neighbors became family.

Fact # 4: She worked hard as a homemaker and made lots of sacrifices for her family. She learned to become an expert seamstress and made much of our clothing. She prepared healthy, balanced and colorful meals from scratch long before Rachael Ray or Martha Stewart taught America how to cook, and she did it on a tight budget.

When Dad thought it would be financially helpful for Mom to earn a little extra money by working outside the house, he said, "Mary, you've got to get a job or else."

She replied, "Ken, I'll take 'or else.'"

Fact # 5: She finally gave in and went back to school to become a hairstylist. She earned her beauty operator's license and opened up a little salon in our basement. She saved her earnings to buy me a beautiful bedroom set which I have and still treasure to this very day. She also helped pay the household bills. She loved her little salon and felt good about making women feel special with each hairdo she created. One

of her favorite clients was a lady who had actually been on the Titanic.

Fact # 6: She believed in taking time out of her busy day for fun activities. She'd do things like string the hose over the clothesline so that we and the neighborhood kids could run under the spray on a hot summer day, she'd play games with us, and she'd also even pretend to be the neighborhood doll doctor if our baby dolls had a fever. She also knew how to make even the most mundane chores fun. For instance, she gave our friends and us five cents for every weed we could pull from her garden that had a root attached to it.

Fact # 7: She was extremely creative and appreciative of the arts. She wrote and illustrated many stories-one being Two Little Sisters, about her and her sister Kay and their lives together on Ohio Street. She wrote song lyrics and many poems. She even wrote a poem of appreciation entitled My Car-which was a 1949 Studebaker given to her by Grandpa Westberg.

Fact # 8: Her creativity didn't stop there. She loved Halloween and was great at creating costumes. Once she talked Dad into being a Swedish nurse for a Halloween party. She squeezed this big, two hundred thirty-pound man into a white dress and white panty hose. She bought him the largest bra she could find and filled it with two blown-up balloons. Later that night during the party, Dad's cigar ashes accidentally fell upon the balloons resulting in two big explosive BANGS, and all the guests hit the floor thinking it was gunfire.

Fact # 9: She was kind and generous. For example, no one ever left our house hungry, and everyone was welcome to our dinner table. Also, she never had the heart to turn away the Avon lady, the Fuller Brush Man or the Encyclopedia Britannica salesperson without buying something from them. As another example of her generosity, she would let me take her gold Ford Falcon back and forth to school every day. She would jokingly say, "I never went to college, but my car did." These are just a few examples of the kindness she demonstrated throughout her entire life.

Fact # 10: She was a great role model. She taught us that being a family means that you are part of something

wonderful. It means that you will love and be loved for the rest of your life and beyond-no matter what you did or didn't do. She taught us to pray and how to commit our worries into God's hands. Through her teachings we know that she will continue into eternal life with God's light shining upon her and that she will always be present to us, knowing, loving and comforting us even more than ever before.

In closing, we would like to cite a short poem that the famous hotel entrepreneur, Conrad Hilton, found among his beloved mother's belongings after her passing. By finding this poem at the exact moment of his deepest sorrow, he believed that his mother was still able to reach out to comfort him. It read:

There's a password for Heaven,

And it is this.

I'm sure she needed no other.

When she stood at the gate of Eternal Bliss,

She said, "Saint Peter, I'm a mother."

Remember Ken (Song Lyrics)

By Mary Westberg

Do you remember one September afternoon,
I stood with you and listened to a wedding tune,
And then we went to Holland on our honeymoon.

Remember Ken?

Do you recall a cottage small upon the lake,
Remember that first chicken that I tried to make,
We landed in a restaurant eating beans and steak.

Remember Ken?

I can see that driving lesson that you gave to me,
We didn't get far, cause I did some kind of damage to the car.

Do you remember just how badly we felt, Ken,
When we found out our honeymoon was at the end,
We planned that we'd go back and do these things again.

Remember Ken?

Remember when the doctor said the stork was due,
And then he brought that little bundle wrapped in blue,
The folks all said that baby John looked just like you.

Remember Ken?

Remember how we thought we'd even up the score,
Along came Lynn-three loving hearts were turned to four,
Those little darlings made our love worth living for.

Remember Ken?

Remember how we planned that we'd go back someday,
Those same things we can't do when we are old and gray,
But in that little cottage such sweet memories stay.

Will you remember Ken?

There's no forgetting,
Remember Ken.

My Feathered Friends

By Mary Westberg

A little robin redbreast came and sat upon my tree.

Looking in my window, she sang a song for me.

"Thanks for all the breadcrumbs you put out every day."

That's what I think this grateful bird was trying to convey.

I love these little feathered friends sent from God above,

To care for and to cherish and to learn their ways of love.

My Car

By M. J. Westberg

(February 25 1957)

When I get behind the wheel of my car small and neat,

I feel like a queen with the world beneath my feet.

I sing as I drive, the whole world becomes alive.

I don't care where I'm going or just when I'll arrive.

Just to step on the pedal and to feel the power of speed,

Or just to cruise along, the relaxing that I need.

What a car, what a gift, the best I've ever had,

And I got this car from my husband's dad.

It's super, it's terrific, and it's all mine,

My little Studebaker, new in 1949.

Can It Be Her?

By Mary J. Westberg That your mom was alive and was

Your temperature rises; Coming to you.

Your heart skips a beat. But she's been gone for too long,

You see this lady And yet,

Walk down the street. I'll never stop looking,

A familiar walk, same legs, I'll never forget.

Same shape,

You try not to stare in awe

Or to gape.

You know it's not her,

But you can't turn away.

Your heart hangs heavy,

Your memories stray.

A tear comes to your eye,

And you try hard to hide

The terrible heartache you're

Feeling inside.

If it could just be what your

Heart wants it to,

Comments



“ John & Lynn and families,
I have so many fond beautiful memories of my childhood and the whole Westberg Family. Sorry to hear of your Mom's passing. May your Mom and Dad be enjoying their time together and watching down on all of you.
With all my love,
Penny Burke Pelletier

Penny Pelletier - February 07 at 07:39 PM



“ What made me “google” Mary’s name today. I thought of Mary so often. The girls Mary, Auntie Stella and My Mom-Little Stella, are all together now. Mary was always so friendly and always made me feel special. I always enjoyed going down to the basement on Winona where Mary would have her area set up to do hair! I think Mary and My Mom went to every mall in the Chicago area! We shared our horrid stories of our migraines. Rest In Peace Mary!

Cheryl A. Optie - February 11, 2021 at 06:51 AM