



Mrs Janet Babowice

September 30, 1933 - March 31, 2025

Janet Babowice, née Buonaro, passed away peacefully in the late evening on March 31. The oldest of Mary and James Buonaro's two daughters, Janet was born September 30, 1933, in Chicago. A loving mother, grandmother, great grandmother, sister, aunt, cousin and friend, a steadfast champion of her husband John, Janet was gregarious and a friend to everyone she met.

Perhaps she is best known for her gracious hospitality on the annual mid-summer Feast of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, in Melrose Park, where her family, their friends, and their friends' friends have gathered for decades to pay tribute to the Blessed Mother and enjoy a bountiful Italian meal under a tent.

Janet's father and mother both immigrated from Naples, Italy, to Chicago in the early 1900s where their relatives resided. Her father was a mechanic for the Pullman Company and her mother worked in retail. The family of four lived in an apartment on Mozart and Sacramento streets in the Humboldt Park neighborhood, where Janet and her sister Lori walked to school. The girls would spend one week each summer at their Albachario cousin's home in Melrose Park, exchanging hot city air for tree-shaded streets and green open lots.

When cousin Carm Albachario announced her marriage, the Buonaros were eager to attend the wedding. Janet was only 14, and as the song goes, the event became "Some Enchanted Evening," whereby two strangers locked eyes across the room and found their love. Janet met the love of her life, Melrose Park-native John G. Babowice, then 16. The Buonaro family

purchased a home in Melrose Park, Janet transferred to Proviso High School where John was on the football team, and the two became inseparable. On her graduation night, John invited Janet to Russell's Barbecue in Elmwood Park. He proposed marriage. Janet, thoroughly smitten and deeply devoted to John, said yes, postponing the wedding until his Army duty in Japan during the Korean conflict was completed. In the meantime, Janet and her sister Lori shared a bench on the Metra commuter train to Chicago each day where they worked for the Federal Reserve Bank.

John returned with hand-painted wedding china and crystal goblets for his beautiful fiancée Janet. They were married on September 11, 1954, at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel. The reception for 300 was held at Westward Ho Golf Club in Northlake. Years later, the club ultimately was sold and became Casa San Carlo independent living, where Janet spent the final years of her life.

Janet was an unparalleled homemaker, proud mother and adoring wife. In 1960, the couple purchased Janet's family home where they raised their four children: Cathy, Jim, John and Janice. Those who entered Janet's home would admire a den wall meticulously hung with dozens of portraits capturing family at all of life's best moments - graduations, weddings, new babies, vacations, the Feast. Janet, an apron thrown over her shoulders and a welcoming smile, would stand behind the kitchen counter and invite guests to take a seat around the oak kitchen table, coffee in hand and a fresh pot brewing. Janet and John would treat each guest like family. As her children started grammar school at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Janet stepped into leadership roles as Cub Scout den mother and president of the PTA. She supported her husband as he pursued public service as a Melrose Park Village Trustee. Janet's strong family-first and faith-born values, and encouragement for educational pursuits, became driving forces for visits to her children and grandchildren's colleges. She'd root for her family at sports and theater events. She'd shout for joy at graduations. She'd follow their sports teams with almost equal fervor, but everyone knew she really loved Notre Dame football the best.

Life was an adventure. Janet had a flair for the arts and enjoyed seats at musicals, opera performances, and visits to the Art Institute of Chicago. Stories of vacations were legendary where the family was packed into the station wagon and John drove cross country to Florida, visiting an uncle who owned a restaurant, or South Dakota, where John had attended college. One family story included the time when Janet, a rockhound at heart, spied a rugged outcrop with gleaming white quartz crystals and begged John to pull the station wagon to the side of the road. She was desperate to take a piece home, so John got out the tire iron, whacked a hunk off the rock, tossed it in the car and hopped back behind the wheel. Janet and John traveled to Arizona, California, Canada, Colorado, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Michigan, Myrtle Beach, New Orleans, North Carolina and the Pacific Northwest, and spent many happy times at Disney World with their children and grandchildren. The couple found their way back to the Magic Kingdom in their older years. As her children grew from grade school to high school and college, Janet accepted a job at Jewel Food Stores, then based in Melrose Park, working her way up from the mailroom to the Accounting Department as a bookkeeper. Embracing Matthew 25:40, "Whatever you did for the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me," Janet and her lifelong friends volunteered at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, providing to those in need. After retirement, John and Janet spent a month each winter on Sanibel Island, Florida. Each day they felt the tides wash over their toes as they meandered along the pristine beaches, combing for shells and spotting an occasional dolphin. They orchestrated visits to children and grandchildren in Ohio, Indiana and North Carolina. Janet, her sister Lori and their Albachario cousins spent an action-packed two weeks in Italy, visiting relatives in Naples and making the pilgrimage to Rome.

Janet's positive outlook, her faith and strength helped her endure her beloved John's four-year cancer illness and subsequent death. The inseparable duo had been married for 60 years. Despite this terrible heartbreak, Janet

persevered even as her own health diminished. She devoted herself to family, traveling to Pennsylvania and South Bend, and even rode Amtrak's Capitol Limited, reserving a sleeper berth, on a return trip to Chicago. She drew on her values of family and faith as she moved into Casa San Carlo. Her passions revived her; bonds made with new companions quickly developed. Table mates became dear, loving friends in no time, weaving the coda "I love you" into their goodbyes. Her family and friends truly infused a new life in Janet. So it was a terrible shock when Janet, who seemed so vital, embraced loved ones, offered her loving kisses and promised "I love you" for the very last time.

Janet is survived by her children Cathy (Rick) Szeghy, Jim (Hope) Babowice, John (Laurie) Babowice and Janice (Don) Jacklich, grandchildren Matt (Elise), Melissa (Dustin), James (Meghan), Zoë (Shannon), Michael (Kiki), John Franklin (Tracee), Elizabeth (Nathan) Jack, Annie (Brad), Tim, Colleen and great grandchildren Connor, Emma, Anthony, Ava and Otto. She also is survived by her sister Lori Buonaro, Carol Moss, niece Diana (Beckham), nephew Eddie (Ruth), their children, her dear cousins, and many, many dear friends. Visitation Monday, April 7, from 10am until time of mass 12pm at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church 1101 23rd Ave Melrose Park. Interment Queen of Heaven Cemetery

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made to Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, 1101 23rd Ave, Melrose Park, IL 60160, (please indicate in memory of Janet Babowice) or the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary United States Region, Support the Retired Sisters, Office of Development, P.O. Box 508, Wheaton, IL 60187, (please indicate in memory of Janet Babowice) and online at <http://ibvm.us/donate/>.

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 7. 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church
1101 23rd Ave
Melrose Park, IL 60160
(708) 344-4140

Tribute Wall

SO

“ Cathy, Jimmy, John & Janice - I am so sorry to hear about your mom. I only found out today, if I had known sooner I would've been at her service. She was a great lady, I have so many fond memories of her, and your dad. She and I worked at Jewel at the same time - it was always great to see her smiling face during the workday. She had a special joy in her heart and shared it with everyone she met. I'll always remember her. I hope you're each able to keep happy memories in your heart to help you during this difficult time.
Much love,
Your cousin Sandy (Kardos) Orlandino

Sandy L Orlandino - April 08, 2025 at 07:44 PM

MI

“ Mary and Jerry Irvine planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mrs Janet Babowice.

Mary and Jerry Irvine - April 06, 2025 at 08:19 PM

MI

“ Mary and Jerry Irvine purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Mrs Janet Babowice.



Mary and Jerry Irvine - April 06, 2025 at 08:19 PM

ED

“ Ed and Ruth & Beckham and Diana purchased the Beautiful Dreams for the family of Mrs Janet Babowice.



Ed and Ruth & Beckham and Diana - April 04, 2025 at 09:38 PM

IF

“ Intuitive Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mrs Janet Babowice.

Intuitive Family - April 04, 2025 at 05:08 PM

IF

“ Intuitive Family purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Mrs Janet Babowice.



Intuitive Family - April 04, 2025 at 05:08 PM

TF

“ The Bozych, Heroux and Schiliro Families planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mrs Janet Babowice.

The Bozych, Heroux and Schiliro Families - April 04, 2025 at 03:27 PM

TF

“ *The Bozych, Heroux and Schiliro Families purchased the Fairest of All for the family of Mrs Janet Babowice.*



The Bozych, Heroux and Schiliro Families - April 04, 2025 at 03:27 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Mrs Janet Babowice.

April 04, 2025 at 01:37 PM



“ *Joyful Memory was purchased for the family of Mrs Janet Babowice.*



April 04, 2025 at 01:37 PM

LM

“ *Love always, Carol Moss purchased the Forever Our Angel Bouquet for the family of Mrs Janet Babowice.*



Love always, Carol Moss - April 04, 2025 at 12:48 PM

CM

“ 4 files added to the album *Over the years*



Carol Moss - April 04, 2025 at 10:08 AM

CM

“ 6 files added to the tribute wall



Carol Moss - April 04, 2025 at 09:59 AM



“ *Dreams From the Heart Bouquet* was purchased for the family of Mrs Janet Babowice.



April 04, 2025 at 09:12 AM