



Mary Ellen LeClair

April 21, 1934 - October 3, 2025

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Mary Ellen LeClair, of Ossining, New York, passed away peacefully on October 3, 2025, at the age of 91.

Born on April 21, 1934, in Saint Paul, Minnesota, Mary Ellen, the oldest of the five children of Edward Jesse Leclair and Irene (Fahey) Leclair, lived a life marked by education, curiosity, quiet strength, and determination. She was known for her warm heart, thoughtful spirit, and enduring grace - qualities that left a lasting impression on everyone who knew her.

Mary Ellen was a stunning woman whose beauty radiated in her appearance and in her vibrant personality and spirit. She was the first in her family to attend college, beginning with her studies at Saint Catherine's College in Saint Paul. She earned her bachelor's degree from St. Michael's College at the University of Toronto, followed by a Master's degree in English from the University of Miami and a Doctor of Arts from the State University of New York at Albany, where she was mentored by the Pulitzer Prizewinning novelist

William Kennedy, author of *Ironweed*.

Mary Ellen's first marriage to Murray Florence, a chemical engineer, and his work for Esso International brought her to many parts of the world and shaped much of her early adult life. Together, they lived in Toronto, Canada; the Island of Aruba; Sleepy Hollow, New York; Coral Gables, Florida; the suburbs of both Buenos Aires, Argentina, and Santiago, Chile. These experiences cultivated in her a deep appreciation for language, culture, and the written word. In later years, she made her home in Irvington, Pound Ridge, and, ultimately, in Ossining, New York, where she lived beside the Hudson - a river that remained a constant source of inspiration.

After Mary Ellen had settled in Westchester County, she embarked on a career as an English teacher at Westchester Community College. Over her 35-year teaching career, she rose through the ranks of academia at WCC to become a Full Professor. She retired at the age of 71 in 2006. Throughout her career, Mary Ellen inspired countless students with her passion for literature and dedication to education. She also helped to bring many renowned authors and poets to the College to give readings to students and faculty, including Nobel Prize winners Toni Morrison, Derek Wolcott, and Seamus Heaney. She believed in the democratization of knowledge and viewed the community college as a means to that end. In the pursuit of that, she exposed WCC's students to the finest writers and poets.

An insightful and prolific poet, Mary Ellen expressed her creativity through her writing, leaving behind a rich collection of poetry that reflects her deep love of language and the world around her. Much of her work is grounded in Minnesota. Its prairies, lakes, and farms, and memories of her ancestral

heritage shaped her sense of self and remained central to her voice as an artist.

Always creative, Mary Ellen brought energy and imagination to her everyday life, to her work, and to her relationships. Her vibrant spirit and boundless curiosity enriched those around her, making her a beloved figure in her community and family. She formed deep and lasting friendships in every phase of her life, cherishing the connections that spanned decades and continents.

Mary Ellen is survived by her loving and devoted husband of 25 years, Robert Haggerty, a retired art teacher and an artist. Bob was the love of Mary Ellen's life, her best friend, and her soulmate.

She is also survived by her daughters Marie Clair Young (and her husband Scott Leonard Young) and Anne Laird Florence-Carroll (and her husband Sean Paudraig Carroll); her five grandchildren Alexandra Leclair Young, Leonard Scott Young (and his wife Figerete Young), Jack Southwood Young, Suzanne Leclair Carroll, and Kelly Marie Carroll; and her beautiful, recently-born great-granddaughter Violet Arta Young.

Mary Ellen was the oldest of five siblings all of whom she was very close with. Her sister Marlene Schell and her brother David LeClair predeceased her. She is survived by Marlene Schell's husband Robert Schell; her sister Jeanine McGregor (and her husband Duncan McGregor); her brother Edward Jesse LeClair (and his wife Mary LeClair); David LeClair's wife Shannon LeClair, and all of her siblings' children - so many wonderful nieces and nephews.

Mary Ellen will be remembered for her lifelong commitment to learning, her generous spirit, her poetic voice, and all the love she shared with her family, friends, and students. Her legacy will continue through the many lives she touched.

A memorial gathering will be held on Thursday, October 9, 2025, from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Dwyer & Michael's Funeral Home in Tarrytown, NY. A funeral service will take place on Friday, October 10, 2025, at 11:00 a.m. at Christ Episcopal Church in Tarrytown, followed immediately by a luncheon reception at The Sailhouse, also in Tarrytown.

Previous Events

Cremation Private

OCT **6** (ET)

Ferncliff Cemetery
280 Secor Road
Hartsdale , NY 10530

Memorial Service

OCT **9**. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Dwyer & Michael's Funeral Home
90 North Broadway
Tarrytown, NY 10591

Funeral Service

OCT **10**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Christ Episcopal Church
43 S Broadway
Tarrytown , NY 10591

Luncheon reception at The Sailhouse, also in Tarrytown, immediately afterwards.

Tribute Wall

FN

“ *Mary Ellen and I have been friends since we taught together at Marymount Academy in Tarrytown, NY in 1968. She always had a book or title for me to read and news and opinions to share. Her loss is hard for her family and friends as she never gave up on keeping up with us and trying to make us all happy. I will miss her, her calls, and lunches*

frances c nicholas - October 14, 2025 at 03:03 AM

AB

“ *My deepest sympathy to you, Bob, the recent loss of your beautiful wife, Mary Ellen. Please know much love is sent your way.*

Adrienne Simidian Baksa - October 09, 2025 at 11:19 AM

TF

“ *The Peloso Family purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Mary Ellen LeClair.*



The Peloso Family - October 08, 2025 at 07:42 PM

DF

“ *Durkin & Chiacchia families purchased the Sweet Tranquility Basket for the family of Mary Ellen LeClair.*



Durkin & Chiacchia families - October 08, 2025 at 05:56 PM

DM

“ Clair and Anne, I hope you both are consoled by pleasant memories.

Don McNeill - October 08, 2025 at 01:21 PM

TF

“ The Strauch family. purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Mary Ellen LeClair.



The Strauch family. - October 08, 2025 at 11:29 AM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Mary Ellen LeClair.



October 08, 2025 at 10:51 AM



“ Beautiful Heart Bouquet was purchased for the family of Mary Ellen LeClair.



October 08, 2025 at 09:10 AM



“ *Pink Potpourri Bouquet was purchased for the family of Mary Ellen LeClair.*



October 07, 2025 at 09:20 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Mary Ellen LeClair.*



October 07, 2025 at 07:06 PM



“ *All the Spaffords & all their children purchased the Pink Tribute Spray for the family of Mary Ellen LeClair.*



All the Spaffords & all their children - October 07, 2025 at 11:05 AM



“ *The van der Spuys purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Mary Ellen LeClair.*



The van der Spuys - October 07, 2025 at 07:36 AM