



## Mrs. Mary L. Rentz

July 27, 1944 - May 13, 2025

Mrs. Mary L. Rentz, of Pittsfield, passed away peacefully on Tuesday, May 13, 2025, just months before celebrating her 81st birthday. Born in Elyria, Ohio, on July 27, 1944, daughter of the late Rev. William and Zulieka Hughes Leath, she graduated from Cleveland Heights High School and later from Kent State University. In 1969, Mary earned her MFA from Northwestern University and began work as a graphic designer in Chicago, IL. After a series of moves as a U.S. Navy spouse, Mary settled her family in Pittsfield in 1976.

Mary's remarkable life in Berkshire County was one of service to others, and a joyful example of the Shaker phrase, "Hands to work, hearts to God." Mary dedicated herself to lifting people up through the visual and performing arts. She also cooked, planned and served meals at St. Joe's Kitchen throughout the last 25 years of her life, and was instrumental in growing the Thanksgiving Angels initiative that has provided meals to thousands of Berkshire families.

Mary was involved in programs that supported Berkshire youth: as a Girl Scout leader for 10 years (troops 533 and 526), a Sunday school teacher at South Congregational Church, a volunteer art appreciation teacher in Pittsfield Public Schools, and as a volunteer at Pittsfield Skating Club. She was the Chairperson of "Sheeptacular," a public art project in Pittsfield, as well as the "Pittsfield 250K" Celebration, and co-chairperson of "The Art of the Game." Mary was also President of the board at Hancock Shaker Village, as well as

designer and quilter of their raffle quilts and docent of Shaker music programs. She was instrumental in the success of The Center for Shaker Scholarship at Hancock Shaker Village. Mary was active in the Berkshire Art Association, which named an art scholarship in her honor. She also served on the board of Trustees at South Congregational Church. She has been honored by Pittsfield Rotary Club, Western Massachusetts Girl Scouts Council, Downtown Pittsfield, Inc. and the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women. In 2015, Mary received the Berkshire Award for her lifetime of service to the Berkshire community.

A passionate and skilled choral singer, Mary sang alto with the South Church Choir, Berkshire Concert Choir, Berkshire Lyric Chorus, and the Cleveland Orchestra Chorus. In addition to singing, she enjoyed traveling, quilting, painting and drawing.

Mary is survived by Peter Rentz, her beloved husband of 58 years, whom she married August 20th, 1966. She leaves behind two daughters, Deborah Rentz-Moore (married to John Moore) of Durham, NH and Sarah Rentz (partnered with Robert Vinas, Jr.) of Wesley Hills, NY, as well as three grandsons: Gibson and Garrett Moore and Avery Vinas.

Besides her parents, Mary was predeceased by her sister, Elizabeth Leath Giffin and her brother-in-law William Giffin.

A musical service giving thanks for Peter and Mary Rentz's lives will take place on August 16th, 1 PM at UCC, Pittsfield, 110 South St, Pittsfield MA 01201

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in honor of Mary Rentz to Hancock Shaker Village at <https://hancockshakervillage.org/support/donate/> or Berkshire Art Association at <https://www.berkshireartassociation.org/support>



# Previous Events

## Celebration of Life

AUG **16**. 1:00 PM (ET)

South Congregational Church  
110 South St.  
Pittsfield, MA 01201

# Tribute Wall

KJ

“ Peter,  
Even as I have only come to know Mary and you recently, in the last 2 years, it is easy to see the devotion you have shared! Not to mention her deep commitment to community and service. As a member of the Hancock Shaker Village family, I am able to enjoy so much of the impact Mary made in this place! Godspeed Mary, and may memories of her, comfort you and your family through this time!!  
Affectionately, Kristie Jacobson

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**Kristie Jacobson** - May 23, 2025 at 01:37 PM

PD

“ Peter, Debby and Sarah,  
  
Mary was an exceptional person who spent her time in the Berkshires in service to our community. She was selfless, always giving her time and talents to others. I feel fortunate to have known her and shared many memorable moments. Thank you for requesting my daughter to help to ease her end of life. She will be missed.  
My deepest sympathies.  
  
Paula Dambrauskas

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**Paula Dambrauskas** - May 22, 2025 at 10:41 AM

CW

“ Peter,  
We were so sorry to read of Mary's passing. She was such a bright and engaging person who left a legacy of service and caring in our community. She will be sorely missed.  
Alba Passerini & Charles Wohl

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**CHARLES IRA WOHL** - May 21, 2025 at 03:56 AM

SM

“ Peter, Deborah & Sarah,  
We are so sorry for your loss. Mary was such a terrific person and always greeted you with a smile. We will always be grateful for her leadership role in the girls scouts and shaping our daughter's future. We will all miss her.  
Silvano & Judy Mastrodicasa

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**Silvano Mastrodicasa** - May 20, 2025 at 07:08 PM

JF

“ Peter,  
  
We are very sorry for your loss. We enjoyed getting to know Mary and her sense of humor along with her kindness she had for her friends.

*Jamie and Liz (Friends Club)*

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**Jamie Field** - May 19, 2025 at 04:56 PM

TM

“ Peter, Deborah & Sarah,  
We were saddened to hear of Mary's passing. Our condolences and prayers at this time of profound loss. I remeber fondly my little part in helping with sheeptacular. She was such a force for local history, scouts and good works in our community. She will be missed by all the lives she has touched.  
Tom, Adriane, Leslie & Kira Martin

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**Thomas Martin** - May 19, 2025 at 08:50 AM

KA

“ Mary helped me when I started my journey working with nonprofit cultural organizations in the Berkshires. She was patient, smart and had a great sense of humor that helped us as we worked together at HSV and for the cities Arts Walk. She had a way of making everyone feel included and valued and she will be missed by many.  
Kas Maroney

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**Kas** - May 18, 2025 at 08:51 AM

WF

“ Mary's life was well lived and an extraordinary gift to all. Her talents and gifts were used in the best way possible. My deepest sympathy to all of her family.

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**William Frazier** - May 18, 2025 at 07:53 AM

AL

“ Sending heartfelt condolences to Deborah and family. I am so sorry for your loss. A beautiful woman, a life well lived.

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**Anne Legêne** - May 17, 2025 at 06:37 AM