



Paula Coughlin Byrdy

March 1, 1935 - July 26, 2025

Paula Coughlin Byrdy, 90, died peacefully on Saturday, July 26, 2025 at the Sedgewick Unit of Kimball Farms Nursing Care Center in Lenox. She had moved to the Kimball Farms Life Care Community from Lanesboro in October, 2019.

Paula was born on March 1, 1935 to Paul J. and Katherine Starr Coughlin of Pittsfield. She was the sixth of eight children. Paula attended Plunkett Junior High School. After graduating from Pittsfield High School in 1952, she enrolled at Smith College and graduated in 1956 with a major in Mathematics.

As she stated in a 2019 interview, her goal after college was to “get into the world and make some money.” She began her career at ATT in New York City, before shortly going to work for IBM in the Bronx as a “System Service Girl”, helping businesses to set up their computer systems. When one of her customers, an importer of British cars, sent her to California to set up an inventory and distribution system, she asked herself “why am I in the Bronx, when I could live in San Francisco?” She was soon transferred, where she thoroughly enjoyed her five years’ stay. It was in San Francisco that Paula learned to fly a small plane.

Before embarking for the West Coast, Paula purchased her first car, a racy little MGA. She and her brother, Tom, drove the distinctive car across the country, in a route that was not designed for efficiency.

Before she retired from IBM in 1994, Paula worked in Stuttgart, Germany, Milan, Italy, and various New York State communities.

Paula was devoted to her husband, Harold S. R. Byrde, MD, whom she met in German Class at Pittsfield High School in 1952. They married on June 17, 1978 at Sacred Heart Church in Pittsfield and moved to Wilton, Ct where they lived until they moved to Lanesboro in 2011 to be closer to their families.

She and Harold never missed a high school or college class reunion, family or friend's wedding, birthday, or any other celebration. Their passports were stamped on five of the seven continents where they skied, hiked and reveled in new experiences. She especially enjoyed skiing and driving her Porsche 911 in the German and Italian Alps. They travelled far and wide in their quest to experience culturally significant events.

She loved opera, theater, books, classical music and gardening.

Paula thoroughly enjoyed hosting parties at their homes, first in Wilton and, later, in Lanesboro. Their vast family relished summer picnics by the pool at their home on Prospect St.

Paula was an active citizen of her communities. Wherever she was she found a Garden Club, Tree Committee or Education Support group to join and actively participate in, whether it was Wilton, Williamstown, Lanesboro or Lenox. She was an enthusiastic member of The College Club of Pittsfield and Zonta Club of Berkshire County. As a Poughkeepsie Sports Car Club member, she was very proud of her 1st Place finish at a Lime Rock Time Trial in 1973. She was not hesitant to join a picket line to advocate for social justice.

Paula was born into a large family where she was loved by all of her sisters and brothers, nieces and nephews and their children. She was generous, kind

and loved to share with others. She was a trailblazer who lived a long, happy life. We treasured the postcards she sent us from far away lands written in her distinctive penmanship (nearly as much as the wonderful mementoes she gave us.) If you were her goddaughter, you were doubly blessed.

Paula was a tireless advocate for Harold when he began to exhibit the symptoms of the effects of the Agent Orange to which he'd been exposed during the Viet Nam War.

Paula is survived by her sister, Mary K O'Brien, (the late Robert) of Lenox, and Carmen (the late Michael) Coughlin of Mountainview, CA, dozens of 3 generations of Donovan, Coughlin, White, O'Brien and Byrdey nephews and nieces and dear friends around the world.

Her beloved husband, Harold, died on March 21, 2023. She was also predeceased by her brothers, David, James (the late Marilyn), Thomas and Michael (Carmen) and her sisters, Jeanne (the late George) Bushey and Carolyn (the late Albert) White and several nieces and nephews.

Paula's family regrets that no words can fully convey our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation for the wonderful, conscientious, professional care she received from the Life Enrichment Memory Care Program (LEP) at Kimball Farms and the Sedgewick Unit at Kimball Farms Nursing Care Center. Everyone there, the medical staff, the social workers and the support staff, performed acts of kindness on a regular basis and reinforced our belief that the value and significance of Paula's life were respected through her final day.

Paula's family will greet family and friends on Friday, August 1, 2025 at 10 am, at Sacred Heart Church, 191 Elm St, Pittsfield, followed by a Liturgy of Christian Burial at 11. Burial will follow at St Joseph's Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Paula's memory may be made to Kimball Farms Nursing Care Center, specifying in the Memo: Sedgewick Unit, in care of the funeral home.

Cemetery Details

St. Joseph Cemetery

222 Peck's Rd.
Pittsfield, MA 01201

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG 1. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Sacred Heart Church
191 Elm St.
Pittsfield, MA 01201

Service

AUG 1. 11:00 AM (ET)

Sacred Heart Church
191 Elm St.
Pittsfield, MA 01201