

## Mrs. Paula J. O'Rourke

October 29, 1951 - October 19, 2025

Mrs. Paula J. O'Rourke, of Pittsfield, passed away peacefully at her home on Sunday, October 19, 2025, just days before celebrating her 74th birthday. Born on October 29, 1951, daughter of the late Joseph and Elena Bilancia Belsito, she graduated from Waterloo Central School and later earned her Bachelor of Arts from State University College at Oswego and her Master's in Library Science from SUNY Albany.

Paula had a long career as a librarian, employed by several Western MA area libraries over the course of her career, including Lee High School, Berkshire Athenaeum, Berkshire Community College, Williams College, Darrow School, and McCann Technical School. She retired in 2013 after four decades of dedicated service.

Raising her children and caring for her grandchildren were significant parts of Paula's life. To say she was a devoted mother and grandmother does not even begin to describe her maternal bond with her children and grandchildren. Among the many gifts she gave them was teaching them all to read.

Paula's hobbies included quilting, knitting, and genealogy. She traveled with her husband, visiting Ireland, Italy, and Canada, as well as many landmarks throughout the United States. The highlight of her genealogy research was a trip to the village of Carpanzano, Italy from which her paternal grandmother,

Maria Sposato, had emigrated. Her trips to Italy always involved visits with her family in Naples, which is where her mother grew up before immigrating to the United States in 1946.

Paula and her husband, Phil, collaborated on many projects throughout their years together, complementing one another's talents in a way that left no question as to their status as soulmates. Paula was struck by the beauty of the land previously occupied by Rotti's Farm and selected it as the location for the home that they designed, built, and decorated together.

During her retirement, she made innumerable contributions to Scoil Rince Breifne O Ruairc, the Irish dance school run by her daughter, Jennifer Darby. Paula found great joy and purpose in designing and making all of the Irish dance costumes worn by the dancers. A few of these costumes were one-of-a-kind solo dresses that she painstakingly designed, embroidered, and constructed for her granddaughters.

Paula is survived by her beloved husband of 50 years, Philip O'Rourke, whom she married on July 4th, 1975. She leaves behind her sister, Ada Belsito, her daughters, Jennifer Darby (Caleb), Erin O'Rourke, and Colleen O'Rourke, her grandchildren, Norrin, Maris, and Lana Darby, and several nieces and nephews.

Funeral Notice:

Funeral services for Paula will be Tuesday, October 28, 2025, with a Liturgy of Christian Burial at 2pm at St. Mark's Church, celebrated by the Rev. John Salatino, Pastor. Burial will be at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Paula's memory can be made to the National Breast Cancer Foundation or the Trustees of the Berkshire Athenaeum, in

care of the Dwyer Funeral Home.

# Previous Events

## Service

OCT **28**. 2:00 PM (ET)

St. Mark's Church  
400 West St.  
Pittsfield, MA 01201

# Tribute Wall

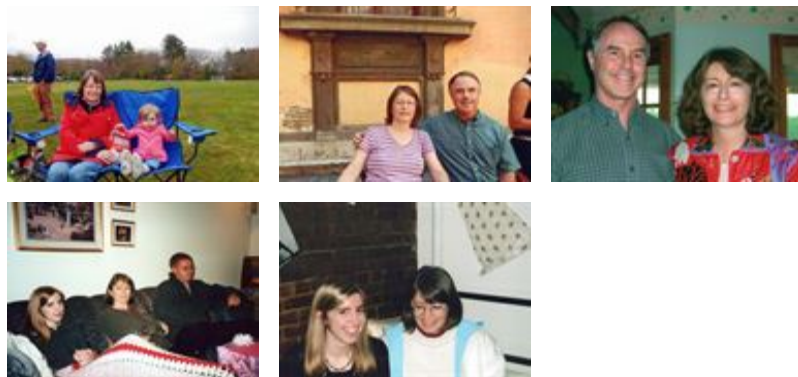


“ Condolences to Phil and the O'Rourke family, may your wife and mother Rest in Peace.

Bill Chisholm - November 01, 2025 at 04:17 PM



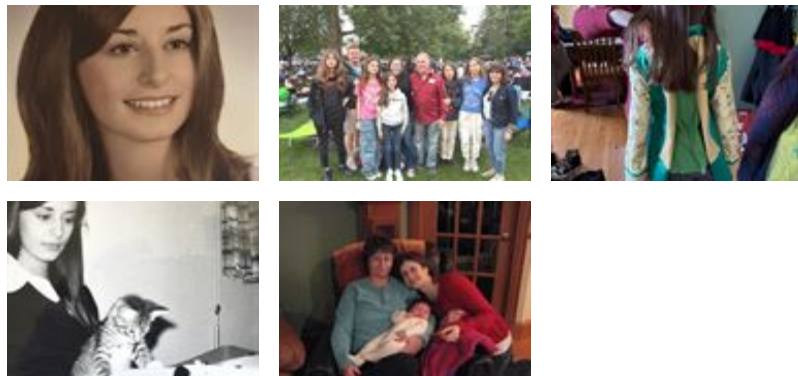
“ 38 files added to the album Life Tributes



Dwyer Funeral Home Inc. - October 28, 2025 at 09:48 AM



“ 48 files added to the album Life Tributes



Dwyer Funeral Home Inc. - October 28, 2025 at 08:38 AM



“ *Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Mrs. Paula J. O'Rourke.*



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October 27, 2025 at 12:45 PM



“ *Dear Phil and Family,  
Our deepest prayers and sympathy are sent your way. Paula offered so much in so many ways. She shared her many talents that were recognized by many. It was always heartwarming to let people know that “ Jennie’s mom made those dancers outfits.” This will continue. They will always have her loving warmth and hands wrapped around them. A tribute to her many talents. We always looked forward to chatting with Paula at Irish events. The beautiful sashes she made for our Irish visitors will continue to be cherished. We know her memories will always be in your hearts and held close. Rest in Peace.*

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**The Gormalley's** - October 25, 2025 at 06:49 AM



“ *Always will be remembered as a kind, gentle, caring human being.  
God speed*

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**Robert Parada** - October 23, 2025 at 06:14 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Mrs. Paula J. O'Rourke.*



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October 23, 2025 at 06:09 PM



“ *Robert Parada planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mrs. Paula J. O'Rourke.*

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**Robert Parada** - October 23, 2025 at 06:09 PM