



Mary E. Gilles

June 9, 1921 - April 18, 2012

Mary Elizabeth Gilles, 90, died at home in Cortland, New York on Monday, April 16, 2012. She was born on June 9, 1921 in St. Johnsbury, Vermont, the daughter of Stephen J. and Gertrude Caldbeck Gilles. She grew up in Fulton, New York, and attended St. Mary's School, Fulton High School, and the College of New Rochelle, class of 1942. She worked for General Electric, American Tobacco Company, and Price Waterhouse in New York City. She taught English and French at Cortland High School for many years. During that time she was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to teach English in Italy for two years, which she did in Parma and Genoa. She was awarded a second Fulbright and taught for two years in Athens, Greece.

Particularly adept at languages, she learned to travel and enjoy culture as a devotee of Dietrich von Hildebrand. While in Italy, she acted as interpreter in the filming of a James Bond movie, "For Your Eyes Only." With her trusty Volkswagen, Athena, she traveled the continent for many years. Several of her best friends still live in Italy and Switzerland. A gifted writer, Mary attended conferences and reported on them in The Wanderer newspaper. She also worked as a reporter for a few years for The Cortland Democrat. Mary loved her faith, her family, a party, a dry martini, and music of all sorts, especially opera.

She is survived by her brother, Stephen, of Utica, New York, his wife, Rena, twenty-seven nieces and nephews, and six great-nieces and nephews.

Calling hours will be Sunday, April 22, 2 to 4 pm, at the Riccardi Funeral Home, 69 North Main Street, Cortland. A funeral Mass will be celebrated on Monday, April 23, at 10 am at St. Mary's Church in Cortland. Burial will follow at S. Mary's Cemetery in Fulton, New York.

Tribute Wall

AP

“ Miss Giles was a charm and as avid a linguist and traveler, she set a great example for us at CHS. To her family, sending condolences to all of you. She will be missed, but she lived the good life!!

Amy Tutino Piatak - May 18, 2018 at 11:27 AM

CT

“ Ms. Gilles was an important teacher for me, and I appreciated her even more as I grew older. Numerous times I have uttered her phrase, "Raise the Level!" in an attempt to guide my children's perspective. She introduced me to the author Willa Cather, who is still a favorite for me. Ms. Gilles affected many lives.

Carol Spence Tuttle - May 18, 2018 at 11:27 AM

CB

“ Miss Gilles was a role model for students and in her later years. She was always aware of world and local events, always interested in what others were doing, always traveling and learning new things. She took full advantage of her ninety years and influenced so many - me included - with the dignity and energy with which she lived her life. May she rest in peace.

Catherine Bertini - May 18, 2018 at 11:27 AM

JR

“ Sweet Mary, she often traveled and so it was not unusual for her to miss Mass for long periods, but the long stretch was enough for me to check on line. I pray for her immortal soul. She loved the Latin Mass and drove to Syracuse to attend it. Feisty and quick to smile she will be sorely missed. I will pass the news on to others who will raise their prayers and shed their tears. May she rest in peace.
Jim

Jlm Reilly - May 18, 2018 at 11:27 AM