



Mary Lillian Villa

March 3, 1927 - October 20, 2020

Mary Lillian Villa (nee Grenon), passed away peacefully on October 20, 2020. Mary Lou was born on March 31, 1927, to Lillian (Wiggins) and Francis Grenon. Born in Buffalo, NY, and raised in Clifton, NJ, Mary Lou graduated from Montclair State Teachers College in June of 1948. A smart, curious woman, Mary Lou once worked as a mathematician for Curtis-Wright, on the X2 rocket plane program on a team started by rocket pioneer Robert Goddard. Always up for an adventure, Mary Lou met her husband, Charles, on a blind date, and married him anyway on June 6, 1953. As a wife and mother, Mary Lou was fearless, resourceful, and good-humored, raising five energetic children, while moving among six different states. When asked how she did it, Mary Lou said "I took a lot of naps." Mary Lou always valued education and life experiences, working as a substitute teacher at Nashua High School in New Hampshire, volunteering as a troop leader for Girl Scouts, and dragging her children to museums all across the Northeast. Mary Lou and Charles moved to Gloucester County in 1977 to purchase and run the Tidewater Motel. After retiring, they built their dream home overlooking the Mobjack Bay, spending much of their time boating, gardening, and forcefully inserting themselves in the lives of their grandchildren (who secretly acknowledge it made all the difference). Of all the places Mary Lou lived, she spent the most time in Gloucester, making many friends and memories through her associations with the League of Women Voters, Gloucester Museum of History, and the Gloucester Public Library. As a devoted member of the Church of Saint Therese in Gloucester, she volunteered at their food pantry and participated in their Sojourners group. Among many efforts made to contribute to their community, she and Charles greatly valued their time spent delivering Meals on Wheels. Mary Lou loved to travel wherever her husband and children were, especially, Italy, London, Hawaii and anywhere they could use their credit card points. Never one to shy away from a challenge, Mary Lou was willing to try most anything. She learned to sail, play golf and even attempted archery with her husband, living to tell the tale. She enjoyed traveling to Carolina Panther football games, becoming proficient enough in the sport that, when she was once asked "what is the most important part of the game", she proudly answered, "field position." Mary Lou was a lifelong Democrat who believed so strongly in her principles that she once stood in the rain to protest US involvement in the Iraq war. In

recent years, Mary Lou enjoyed sitting in the sunshine, reading anything politics related, working in her rose garden, and sharing time with her beloved family and close friends. She was preceded in death by her husband, Charles J. Villa, Sr., her brother, Francis J. Grenon, and her niece, Margaret 'Peggy' Grenon. She is survived by her children Charles J. Villa, Jr., Bob Villa (Ann Baker), Mary Kay Villa Nixon (Greg Nixon), Mark Villa, and Suzanne Villa Glascock (Ned Glascock); her grandchildren, Bill Conides (Tara Strong) and Katie Conides (Jonathan Avila); her three great-grandchildren, Lucille, Maximus, and Maybelle; and many nieces and a nephew. Her quick wit, thoughtful conversation, and unsolicited opinions will be missed. The family wishes to thank Riverside Hospice and her private caregivers for their kind and considerate care of both Mary Lou and her family. In lieu of donations, she would want you to vote.