



Shirley (Rush) O'Brien

August 5, 1923 - January 18, 2021

Shirley Helen O'Brien, 97, of Berlin, wife of the late George O'Brien Jr, passed away peacefully Monday (January 18, 2021) at Middlesex Health Care Center in Middletown. A native and longtime New Britain resident, Shirley was a graduate of New Britain High School, Class of 1941. Shirley was a war bride, proud of George's US Navy service during WWII, working at Fafnir Bearing Company during those years. Later she was office manager at Plainville Machine & Tool for many years. Shirley has resided in Berlin since 2008 at Sage Pond Place, among helpful neighbors.

Shirley was the daughter of Gustave and Helen (Yabs) Rush. She will be dearly missed by her three daughters, Cheryl O'Connor and husband Daniel O'Connor of Edison, NJ, Susan O'Brien of Middletown, CT, and Jill Parkin and husband Don Barthelemy of Austin, TX. She leaves her six beloved grandchildren, Owen O'Connor, Colin, Molly and Mackenzie Felth, Rachel Gonzaga, Susannah Parkin, and beloved great grandson, Ilan Gonzaga. Shirley also leaves sister-in-law Audrey Russo, several nieces and nephews, and family friend Stella St Cyr. Shirley was predeceased by her sister, Ruth Barbour, whom she greatly missed.

Married for 71 years to George, for Shirley, family truly came first. She dedicated her life to her family growing up, and never stopped. Likewise, she loved and was loved by her six grandchildren, who enhanced her life immeasurably. Shirley and George hosted family for many memorable Christmases, a beloved tradition. A positive aspect of Shirley's life was raising

her family in a close knit Glen Street neighborhood.

Shirley was known for being a good seamstress, a joyful pianist, and an avid housekeeper, things she really enjoyed. She planted her flower garden annually, and enjoyed making her family's favorite dishes. Another favorite activity was dancing, especially tap dancing, which she did at the New Britain Senior Center for many years. Shirley had a lifelong love of books and read avidly. The interest she immersed herself in the most was following the Syracuse Orange and their athletic teams, especially basketball, football, and lacrosse. This team gave Shirley many, many hours of pleasure (and pain), a passion she passed along to her entire family.

A funeral service and burial will be private. A Memorial Mass will be celebrated later at a time when conditions allow it. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Stuttering Foundation of America, P.O. Box 11749, Memphis, TN 38111-0749. Carlson Funeral Home, New Britain, is assisting the family with arrangements. Please share a memory or note of sympathy at www.carlsonfuneralhome.com

Cemetery Details

Private

Tribute Wall

AB

“ Dear Family,
Most of us have not met each other. I never met Shirley but feel that I know her through my awesome daughter-in-law, Jill.
Shirley led an interesting and productive life rearing three great ladies, championing her grandchildren and was enchanted when she met her bubbly great grandson Ilan.
You are truly fortunate to have had such a great lady as a model in your lives.
As Shirley moves on to her well deserved peace, I send my deepest sympathy to all of you.
Affectionately,
Audrey Barthelemy

Audrey Barthelemy - January 21, 2021 at 11:30 PM

CK

“ Many memories of visiting Mrs. O'Brien's welcoming home on Glen St. When I was in elementary school she made the best rice krispie treats. As I got older I do remember her love of reading. My sincere sympathy is wished to Sue and family.
Carol Ponte Kubala

Carol Ponte Kubala - January 21, 2021 at 10:19 PM

JH

“ Susan and your family,

I am so sorry to hear of your Mom's passing. My thoughts and prayers are with you at this most difficult time.

Janie Holmstrom

Jane Holmstrom - January 21, 2021 at 03:03 PM

LM

“ Shirley you have been a wonderful and elegant Mom of our neighborhood, which your care and creativity helped make a truly joyful place to be. I will never forget a single moment when your loving friendship increased the happiness or reduced the pain of life's most meaningful passages. Thank you, Shirley, for being present with us and for honoring us with your spirit of care and your personal mission to give to us your unconditional love in every season of time and now in memory everlasting.

Lanette Spranzo Macaruso - January 20, 2021 at 09:50 PM

DG

“ We're going to miss you Aunt Shirley. Denise Goforth

denise goforth - January 20, 2021 at 01:53 PM


JP

“ What a wonderful, welcoming and graceful woman to me and my family. Rest In Peace kind lady.

Joyce Vaden Porter
Kernersville NC

Joyce Vaden Porter - January 20, 2021 at 09:56 AM

GB

“ Aunt Shirley was the best. My sisters and I loved her very much. We have so many great memories. Say hi to my mom for me.....


Gail Boughton - January 19, 2021 at 11:00 AM

VH

“ *My siblings and I grew up visiting my grandparents Ann and Bill Conlon. Shirley and her husband George were always right across the street waiving and coming over to say hello. The friendship that my grandparents and Shirley and her husband George had is something I have always aspired to have in my life. I know she is safely in George’s arms now and all four of them are chatting away in heaven.*

Victoria Hooker-Felker - January 18, 2021 at 10:47 PM

MO

Victoria, that's such a beautiful sentiment and a comforting image. (i know it's been a few years) Thank you. Love, Molly

Molly - August 02, 2025 at 06:48 PM