

**Catherine “Kay” Hanley**  
(1923 – 2017)

**Catherine “Kay” Mary Hanley nee Bartsch**, age 94, of Wilmette, beloved wife of the late Pat Hanley for 50 years; loving mother of Beth (Chris) Dunn and John F. (Amy) Hanley; proud grandmother of Jack, Patrick and Katie Dunn and Bridget, Ellie and Claire Hanley; dear sister of the late Jack (Peg) Bartsch; fond aunt to many nieces and nephews.

She lived an extraordinarily life that spanned almost a century: she was born in 1923 during the Roaring Twenties and she fondly remembered her parents enjoying night life in Chicago during that time and spending Sunday afternoons with her O’Riley grandparents, aunts and uncles and cousins. Catherine grew up during the Depression years of the 1930s, but she was always grateful for a happy and stable family.

Her father, Frank Bartsch, served for many years as the Deputy Director of Insurance for the State of Illinois and her parents had a long friendship with John T. and Catherine MacArthur. Catherine enjoyed telling stories related to MacArthurs, including a postwar ride she took in a B-24 Liberator bomber reassembled from spare parts by Mr. MacArthur.

She was a graduate of St. Francis Xavier in Wilmette and New Trier High School. She attended the University of Illinois, where she joined the Alpha Xi Omega sorority, and then moved to Washington, DC, from 1943-45 to help with the war effort. During her time in Washington, Catherine worked as a bookkeeper for the U.S. Navy reconciling the accounting records for ships at sea, witnessed FDR’s funeral procession and experienced joy of VJ Day in the nation’s capital. On a trip back to Chicago in 1944, she was present when Eleanor Roosevelt accepted the Democratic presidential nomination on FDR’s behalf at the Chicago Stadium.

After the war, Catherine returned to Chicago where she managed bookkeeping for Encyclopedia Britannica, a large international beef cattle company and ultimately—for almost 30 years until age 80—a large North Shore dental practice. In 1962, with the encouragement of a childhood friend of Catherine’s, John “Pat” Hanley tracked down Catherine by visiting the Wilmette Public Library to get her home address which was actually only a few blocks away. Mr. Hanley then immediately went to her house to introduce himself. On their first date, he informed Catherine that he was going to marry her. Their partnership was one of love and action to make life better for their family and others less fortunate than themselves. The couple moved back Wilmette and the North Shore and, miraculously, Catherine gave birth to Beth (at age 42) and John (at age 44).

She loved reading and history but was focused on living in the present with her family (and using FaceTime for those living far away) and always being optimistic about the future. She was unfailingly energized by an afternoon drive to see her beloved Lake Michigan or by talking about Chicago’s rich traditions and pastimes. She visited her son John in London in her 70s and flew to Washington by herself to celebrate her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday with John and his family. She enjoyed her 94th birthday this spring with her six grandchildren at Easter Mass at St. Francis.

Ma Mere, as she wanted to be called by the grandchildren, was an avid Cubs fan who attended some of the most important games in the history of the franchise. These included a 1945 World Series game and the famous Babe Ruth “called shot” game in the 1932 Series. She said that she wondered “...why Babe Ruth was pointing when he came to the plate in that game.” Since the Cubs didn’t win any of those championships, she had to wait close to 80 years until they captured it last year.

As a student at St. Francis Xavier, Catherine told her Sister of Charity teacher that she would live to be 100 – and that she was determined to do so. She came really close...