



## Mary Isabel "Mikey" Doak

November 24, 1923 - October 13, 2023

### MARY ISABEL "MIKEY" DOAK

The smooth skin on her face, silky white hair, bright eyes and kind smile belied the truth that Mary Isabel Doak nearly 10 decades ago was a scrappy young girl whose siblings dubbed her "Mike" because she reminded them of a tomboy of that name they had seen in a movie. The nickname stuck for nearly 100 years. Until her death at the Family Hospice in Pittsburgh on Oct. 13, 2023, the woman born Mary Isabel Miller on Nov. 24, 1923, in Nutley, New Jersey, was "Mike," or "Mikey" to the many family members and friends who knew and loved her.

"If you knew her, you loved her," said her only daughter, Janice.

Mikey was a shining representative of what's called "The Greatest Generation" or the World War II generation - those born between 1901 and 1927. She started life in the Roaring 20s, then was thrown into the Great Depression only six years later. As a teen, she said she remembered visiting beaches near her home and finding bits of ships that had been sunk by German submarines off the Jersey Shore in the years before the start of World War II. Her early life helped shape her into the woman she became - frugal, polite, and charitable - willing to seek out and help those less fortunate than her. And thankful for whatever life gave her. Her children joked that if she

got hit by a bus and survived, she would probably get up and thank the driver for not killing her. That is who she was.

She married the love of her life, Kenneth W. Doak, on Aug. 11, 1945. The story of their first meeting is family legend. They hit it off at a dance they both attended. When it ended and Mikey made her way to the line of buses waiting to take dance-goers home, Ken realized he never got her last name. So, the determined young man from Missouri went bus-to-bus until he found Mikey, and through an open window as the bus prepared to leave, she told him her name was Miller. Ken later executed his plan to call every Miller in the local phone book. He got lucky early in his effort when her brother, Bud, answered the call and gave Ken all the info to contact Mikey in the future. And the rest is history.

The pair of animal loving kindred spirits were married for 59 years until Ken's death in 2004. The couple had three children and more dogs and cats than you could count. Ken's job as a renowned scientist took the family from New Jersey to Pittsburgh in 1955, where they had a home in Forest Hills. In 1960, they moved back to New Jersey. Mikey and Ken moved back to Murrysville in 1971. After Ken's death, Mikey moved into the Longwood at Oakmont retirement community, where she would stay until failing health pushed her into Family Hospice in her final days.

During her marriage and after Ken's death, Mikey held several jobs - both paid and as a volunteer. She was a school secretary and officer on the Parent Teacher's Association in New Jersey; served as a church secretary for the Cross Roads Presbyterian Church in Monroeville and was an active member of the Unitarian Universalist Church in Shadyside. Mikey was active in the League of Women Voters and served 10,000 hours as a volunteer for Contact Pittsburgh, a 24-hour crisis hotline.

She was a volunteer Emergency Medical Technician with Franklin Rescue 4 and was instrumental in the group's merger with Franklin Rescue 5 to form Murrysville Medic One, which she continued to serve on for years after it was formed.

Mikey was an environmentalist who truly cared about the world she would leave for her children and grandchildren. Toward that end, years before her eventual death, she planned her "green burial" at the Penn Forest Natural Burial Park in Verona. The burial on Oct. 23, 2023, once again unites her with her beloved husband, Ken, whose cremated remains will be placed inside her shroud when her body is lowered into the ground.

Mikey is survived by her daughter, Janice Wirth and her partner, Jeffrey Savitskie; son, Kenneth A. Doak; son, Michael (Eleanor) Doak; grandchild, Courtney (Anthony) Orazio, and their son, James; grandchildren, Michelle and Jenny Doak; honorary grandchild, Amelia Romero.

A memorial service at the Penn Forest gravesite is being planned for 11 a.m., Nov. 24, 2023, the day Mikey would have turned 100 years old. The cemetery is at 121 Colorado St., Verona PA 15147. Friends are welcome. +

In lieu of flowers donations may be made to Animal Protectors of Allegheny County, 730 CHURCH STREET, NEW KENSINGTON, PA 15068.

# Cemetery Details

## **Penn Forest Cemetery**

121 Colorado Street  
Verona, PA 15147

# Tribute Wall

PS

“ *What a beautiful tribute to your beautiful mom. It's so very hard to forget someone who gave you so much to remember. May she live in your heart fotrver my forever friend* ❤️

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**Phyllis Spicuzza** - October 20, 2023 at 10:32 AM