



## Alma K. Shea

September 13, 1922 - July 16, 2004

Alma K. Shea, 81, a resident of Nedrow, New York for 50 years, passed away at home Friday, July 16, 2004 after a long struggle with Pancreatic Cancer.

Alma was born September 13, 1922 in Schenectady, New York, the daughter of William A. and Frances S. (Steinmann) Keefer. Alma graduated from Good Samaritan Hospital School of Nursing in Troy, New York and earned her baccalaureate at Cortland State University at the age of 44 while working and caring for a home, three children and a husband. That was a proud moment in her career. She was a school nurse in Troy, New York and Altamont, New York before moving to Central New York where she was a school nurse-teacher at Tully Central School and later at the Onondaga Nation School. She also spent many years as a Pediatric Nurse at the Old Memorial Hospital. Alma retired from LaFayette Central School District in 1978. She was predeceased by her sister, Frances Keefer in 1986.

Alma is survived by her husband of 55 years, Robert J. Shea; a daughter and son-in-law, Alma S. and Michael Zalewski of Liverpool, New York; two sons and their wives, J. Paul and Shirley Shea of Knoxville, Tennessee and Richard W. and Vivian Shea of Tully, New York; a sister, Marion K. Keohan of Scotia, New York; two brothers and their wives, John Howard and Diane Keefer of Grand Isle, Vermont and William A. Keefer Jr. and Ann of Schenectady, New York. She also has six grandchildren, Katie Shea of Seattle, Washington,

Miranda Shea of Portland, Oregon, Erin Shea of Cortland, New York, Meghan Zalewski of Liverpool, New York, Jessica Zalewski of Liverpool, New York and Daniel Shea of Tully, New York as well as several nieces and nephews.

Services: Monday, July 19, 2004, 8:30 a.m. at Ballweg & Lunsford Funeral Home and 9:00 a.m. in St. James Church, 4845 S. Salina Street, Syracuse, New York where a Mass of Christian Burial will be Celebrated by Father John Finnegan.

Burial will be at a later date in St. Agnes Cemetery, 2315 South Avenue, Syracuse, New York.

Calling Hours: Sunday, July 19, 2004,  
2:00 - 5:00 p.m. at the funeral home,  
4612 S. Salina St., Syracuse, New York.

Contributions: Macular Degeneration Research, 22512 Gateway Center Drive,  
PO Box 1952, Clarksburg, MD 20871-1952  
or Hospice of Central New York,  
990 Seventh North Street, Liverpool, NY 13088-6148.

# Tribute Wall



“ *Ballweg & Lunsford Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Alma K. Shea*



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**Ballweg & Lunsford Funeral Home** - July 16, 2004 at 12:00 AM



“ *Dear Bob, Alma & Mike, Dick & Vivian, Paul & Shirley and their families: We send our sincere sympathy. It was my pleasure to meet Alma on the first day she substituted for the nurse in the early seventies at Tully Central High School. During lunch we found that we shared common interests in cooking and sewing, etc. We have been friends since that great day. During our last conversation she said "I have had a good life, a loving family, host of friends and I have beat the odds". Her memory card sounds just like Alma. We will think of her as resting, free of pain with the abundant love of family and friends.*

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July 26, 2004 at 12:00 AM



“ Grandma was a great example of living strong, of life triumphing over cancer. She lived with cancer for over 25 years. It never depressed her. She never altered her life, she never complained, she just pressed on. When she was told recently that her cancer was ahead in the race, she continued to press on, living her life on her terms, spending her precious time with family and friends, planning the future, and even planning for today. For those of you living with cancer, or who have a loved one living with cancer, Grandma is a model of courage to follow. Carry her strength with you.

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July 23, 2004 at 12:00 AM



“ On behalf of all of the Shea grandchildren, I wanted to share a few memories of our lives with our grandma. Our family time was always fun, full of laughs, running around, and eating good food. Every Christmas she'd spend days making rouladen and spatzle for Christmas dinner. We'd all sit around the tree in our matching Polly Flinders dresses, listening to grandpa's guitar, and opening gifts of handmade Christmas ornaments. Every summer when we were young, we'd spend countless hours in the backyard pool, asking grandma to help us start whirlpools with her signature sidestroke. Then we'd spend the rest of the day begging her to pick raspberries from her garden with us. She taught us how to sew; how to knit; and how to make netballs. She would never forget to send a card to each of us on every holiday. She and grandpa both instilled in all of us a love of camping and the outdoors from the many times we spent with them in Florida, at Bowman Lake, and at various other places. Times spent around the campfire are some of the fondest that we can speak of. In short, she was a wonderful woman and a wonderful grandmother, and she taught us about a love of life, consideration for others, and about the strength of family.

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July 23, 2004 at 12:00 AM



“ Little did I know when I became a nurse 31 years ago that a special bond would be created with mom. That bond was nursing; an incredible desire and mission to help others. I was the first daughter-in-law. I was only 19 and I had just graduated from nursing school. When I look back I realize that it had to be difficult for Mom to have her son leave home and get married so young. She was a school nurse at that time and had experience in the newborn nursery. As time went on it was clear that we had a language in common that only the two of us could truly understand called "medical speak". I am sure there are family members here that can attest to our driving them crazy with our "medical speak", over diagnosing our family and friends' illnesses. Dad will tell you that we burned a lot of dollars on the telephone tapping each other's knowledge. We trusted each other's nursing instincts and our combined efforts resulted in helping someone we loved ranging from childbirth to heart surgery and cancer treatment. Helping someone in need best characterizes mom. Let me define need! Need ranged from need in the kitchen with her famous recipe for 14 day pickles, to the remedy for removing the most ugly stain, to the perforated vegetable bags that keep your vegetables fresh for weeks. ( I have to confess that I have never had the patience to make those 14 day pickles but the perforated vegetable bags are the cat's meow!) Need also included giving support and advice to breast cancer patients on how to go on after losing a breast. She had lost both of her breasts to cancer by 1980 and somehow could just keep going when everyone else would have given up. In 1985 she was stricken with cancer again, and she did not let it stop her. She had discovered the secret that most cancer patients search for and never find. That is to live each day one at a time and use their experience to help someone else. That need came again when she served as a role model for her son Paul when he was diagnosed with cancer almost three years ago and needed to take chemotherapy. At the time he told me and his mother that he did not believe he would live to see 50. She told him he was going to be fine and encouraged him to be positive and he would be fine. Mom lived to see Paul reach his 50th birthday last Wednesday July 14th. When I told her that it was Paul's birthday

*and that he had made it to 50, she responded with a smile. Then we witnessed her peacefully "letting go", to prepare for her new home in heaven two days later. Her work was done. So by now I think you are getting to appreciate how Mom was always helping someone in need. I would like to close by sharing a prayer that hangs from her bedroom wall. A few weeks ago I asked her where it came from and she told me that a classmate's mother gave it to her for her graduation from nursing school in 1943. This prayer has been on her bedroom wall since that time. It was her daily inspirational message. When I read it I interpreted as being more than a nurse's prayer. It is also somewhat of a mother's prayer. A Nurse's Prayer by Motto: The world grows brighter year by year, because of some nurse in a little sphere, puts on her apron, smiles and sings, and keeps on doing the same old things; Taking the temperatures, giving the pills to remedy mankind's numerous ills, feeding the babies, answering the bells, being polite with a heart that rebels, Longing for home, and all the while, wearing the same old professional smile, blessing the newborn baby's first breath, closing the eyes that are stilled in death, Taking the blame for all the mistakes, Oh Dear! What a lot of patience it takes.....Going off duty at seven o'clock, tired, discouraged and ready to drop, but called out to help at 7:15 with woe in the heart that must not be seen, Morning and evening, noon and night, just doing it over, hoping its right. When we report off to cross the bar, dear Lord, will you give us just one little star? To wear on the cap of our uniform new--- in the ward above, where the head nurse is you! Mom has earned many stars. Her greatest achievement is her family. She has shown love, kindness and fairness to each one of us. Her courageous battle with cancer has taught us to be optimistic and to live each day, one at a time. During these final weeks of Mom's life, her suffering brought us together, even though many miles separated us in our daily life. We have laughed, cried and shared another day. Thank you Mom. We love you. You will live in our heart forever and we will promise to live each day one day at a time.*

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July 23, 2004 at 12:00 AM



“ To Bob and the entire Shea family: Please accept my heartfelt condolences regarding the passing of Alma. She was a special lady and will be greatly missed by us all. I'm sorry that I couldn't attend the services. I was there in thought. Our thoughts and prayers are with you.

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July 20, 2004 at 12:00 AM



“ I am so saddened to learn of the passing of Mrs Shea. I know its very hard to lose a mother. I remember all the good times I had when visiting the Shea household. Your wife and mother had such energy and patience. She was a very caring and thoughtfull person. I will always remember her fondly. My thoughts are with you Alma, Paul, Dick and Mr Shea. Kristen Steen

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July 19, 2004 at 12:00 AM



“ The community has lost a wonderful person in Alma Shea. She was a great advocate for her community and the Onondaga Central School district. She and Bob worked long and hard to save Rockwell School and to help my husband gain a seat on the OCS school board. They spent many hours holding signs on the corner, going door to door passing out flyers and attending meetings (and they didn't even have kids in school). We appreciated all the tireless deeds they did and hours they spent for our community. Alma was also a great neighbor - helping my mother-in-law whenever she could. Everyone should be lucky enough to have neighbors like the Sheas. We will miss her deeply and our heartfelt sympathy goes out to Bob and her family. Kathy and Brian Madigan

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July 19, 2004 at 12:00 AM



“ *Our thoughts and prayers are extended to Paul, Shirley and the girls. We know you have suffered a great loss and were very close to your family in Syracuse...The Jack Polidoro family*

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July 18, 2004 at 12:00 AM



“ *Mr. Shea and families: We are sad to hear about Mrs. Shea's passing away. We know she is in a better place with no more pain or suffering. You have been in our thoughts and prayers. With sympathy and many fond memories.*

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July 17, 2004 at 12:00 AM



“ *we've known and loved you for years.thanks for being you.*

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July 17, 2004 at 12:00 AM



“ *Our thoughts and prayers are with the family today, tomorrow, always. Mrs. Shea was a part of our lives as well, and she will be missed.*

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July 17, 2004 at 12:00 AM



“ Dear Bob and family, Our sincerest heartfelt condolences go out to you all for the loss of a dearly beloved wife, mother and grandmother. Although we never had the pleasure of meeting Alma, the regular and informative correspondence that passed between us, your "Welsh family" and yourselves, we could sense the love, devotion and respect she gave, and received from others which is evident by reading the tributes today. Although the miles and an ocean may separate us, rest assured that our thoughts and prayers are with you all, "May the Lord in His wisdom grant her everlasting peace"

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July 17, 2004 at 12:00 AM



“ god bless.

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July 17, 2004 at 12:00 AM



“ Dick and Viv, we love you guys....our prayers are with you and your family.

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July 17, 2004 at 12:00 AM



“ Aunt Alma I always loved you and always respected your advice. You will be well in Gods hands.

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July 17, 2004 at 12:00 AM



“ Dick & Viv & family our thoughts are with you and your family at this difficult time.

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July 17, 2004 at 12:00 AM



*“ Mr. Shea, When I was was growing up, it was always a pleasure for our two families to spend time with each other. Mrs. Shea will be missed but I know that she goes on to a better place.*

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July 17, 2004 at 12:00 AM



*“ To the Shea Family:Please accept my heartfelt condolences for the passing of Alma. It was an honor for me to work with her and to get to know her. She was a wonderful woman and you will have many happy memories of her. I'm sorry I can't be there for the services as I'm leaving on vacation this morning. But know that my thoughts and prayers are with your family. Carol A. Anderson, MSWHospice*

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July 16, 2004 at 12:00 AM



*“ My thoughts and prayers are with you. May you take comfort in your loving family.Carissa (Fontanella) Bracero*

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July 16, 2004 at 12:00 AM



*“ Dear Uncle Bob & Family,Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to you and all on the loss of Aunt Alma. You are in our prayers. God bless you all. Love, Dino & Donna*

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July 16, 2004 at 12:00 AM



“ Mrs. Shea was a kind and caring woman who possessed an adventurous spirit. No project ever intimidated her and when visiting, you'd never know what project she'd be tackling. You might find her painting a room, sewing something to wear, or canning some fruit or vegetable that she'd been out gathering earlier in the day. Growing up with the kids in the family, I was welcomed to share in family fun. I enjoyed tagging along on family camping trips to the Adirondacks and to Cooperstown where many a fond memory was made singing around the campfire while Mr. Shea played the guitar Mrs. Shea always faced life full of energy and spirit. That spirit provided many of us with a lot of happy memories. She created a home that was welcoming to all her kids and their friends. She taught me that there really is no project that can't be tackled with a bit of planning and some hard work. She left an impact on my life and I will always remember her. Today and always, may your memories bring you strength, comfort and peace. May God bless her. The heavens will shine a little brighter with her among the stars.

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July 15, 2004 at 12:00 AM