



In Loving Memory
CELEBRATING A LIFE

Memorial Service

Marquette United Methodist Church
Saturday, August 19, 2023, at 10:30 AM

Officiating Clergy

Pastor Brenda Hogan ~ Rev. Amy Kay Pavlovich

Special Music

Hymn: "How Great Thou Art"
Duet: "Nearer My God to Thee"
Dana & Julie Olson, vocalists
Marcene Kempke, pianist

Ushers

Craig Larson ~ Tim Ponting

Final Resting Place

Marquette Cemetery
Military Honors by
McConnell Air Force Base Honor Guard

Memorial Donations

Memorial donations can be made to Marquette United Methodist Church, Westlake United Methodist Church (Westlake Village, CA), Marquette EMS, or Marquette Ministerial Alliance in care of Stockham Family Funeral Home, 205 North Chestnut, McPherson, KS 67460.

Appreciation

Mary's family wishes to express their sincere appreciation for all your prayers and kindness, evidenced in thought and deed, and for your presence at this service.

Stockham Family Funeral Home



In Loving Memory

Mary K. Nolan

August 26, 1920 - August 10, 2023



A Celebration of Life *Mary Katherine Nolan*

Mary Katherine (Wickstrom) Nolan, 102, of Marquette, KS, passed away peacefully on Thursday, August 10, 2023, in Marquette.

She was born on August 26, 1920, in rural Marquette, the daughter of E. Birdette and Grace B. (Hollingsworth) Wickstrom. In Mary's own words, she was a "Kansan at heart". She was born and raised on the farm, living in the house that her grandparents built. Mary's first mode of transportation was her Shetland pony, Blackie, whom she rode daily to country school. Since it was 8 miles to high school, Mary stayed with Uarda Thompson during the week and came home on weekends. That worked fine until one weekend, she packed her bags and waited on the curb for her dad to come get her. When he arrived, she declared she was quitting school. Her father said he didn't think so, but they would discuss it with her mother. She didn't quit school, but she did get a car, and Mary and her Model T became the "bus" to pick up others along the way. Ernest Johnson, the bank president, wrote out her driver's license, and she used that license until she was several years into her military service.

Following high school, Mary attended Bethany College, then graduated from Trinity Lutheran Hospital School of Nursing. For the next several years, she chose to do private duty nursing. From the start, she connected with her patients. One couple even wrote to her parents and asked if they could adopt her!

In 1945, she volunteered for Army duty as a 2nd Lieutenant. Colorado Basic Training was the same for the men and women, and she crawled under barbed wire fences with the best of them. Fort Riley proved to be her first assignment, and it was there she met and shook hands with General Dwight D. Eisenhower.

After two years of working with tuberculosis patients at Fitzsimons General Hospital, she was accepted to

Flight Nurse School with the Air Force. After duty at Maryland and Arizona, she "volunteered" for duty in Greenland for fifteen months. When checking her bag for the flight, the airman said her bag was overweight and that she would have to leave some items behind. Problem-solver that she was, she told the airman to add the extra weight of her bag on to her own weight, thus keeping her within limits. He thought she was kidding, but she held firm, and she and her bag went to Greenland.

After returning to the states, she was sent to Lowry Air Force Base, an assignment that she loved. Mary has always been a take-charge individual. During one medical emergency, she was moving equipment to a patient. As she worked, a man spoke up behind her, asking if there was anything that he could do to help? Without looking up, she said, "Get out of my way!" As she made her sharp reply, she glanced up and glimpsed the stars on his shoulder, and quickly added, "Sir!" He said, "I think you're right." It was at Lowry she was promoted to Captain.

Three years later, she was off to Libya and then Morocco, where she was the only female officer with the 17th Air Force Headquarters Dispensary. She was nurse, pharmacist, narcotic officer, confidant, banker, and mother to the enlisted troops.

Throughout her life, Mary has always shown compassion for others. In fact, she changed one young man's life. While attending a medical conference in Wiesbaden, Germany, the nursing staff said they had a patient requesting to see her. When she walked in the room, the man said he had spent years following her career and promotions just hoping for the opportunity to thank her in person. You see, in Mary's early years at Fitzsimons Army Hospital, she had been persistent and had convinced the surgeon to perform cosmetic corrective surgery on the soldier. That surgery, he told her, opened his world and changed his life. Mary's actions were not surprising; she always put others first.

Hospital Administration was the next step in Mary's career with stops at Maxwell AFB in Alabama and as a Nurse Advisor to three Air National Guard units.

Returning abroad, Mary spent three years in France as Chief Nurse with the best nursing staff ever and was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. As a bonus, she met Alson Nolan, whom she would later marry. One Saturday, an officer had lined up a very early-morning outing. Mary didn't really want to go and, believing herself alone, vocalized her opinion in the hall, "Whose dumb idea was this?" Lieutenant Colonel Alson Nolan said, "That would be mine." Little did she know that was the start of a wonderful journey.

As Chief Nurse in Biloxi, Mississippi, she oversaw 100 nurses and 200 airmen. After twenty-three years of military duty, retirement began to look good. California became home, and the Lieutenant Colonel she met in France came calling, and she said, "YES!" On March 9, 1969, Mary and Al were united in marriage. He preceded her in death on December 8, 2000.

All through the years, Mary continued her love of adventure and traveled to twenty-eight countries. Most of all, Mary loved God, her family, friends, and country. Mary showed us how to live life to the fullest.

Survivors include: a niece, Cynthia (Mike) Hulse of Marquette, KS; nephews, Todd Parkhill of Los Angeles, CA and Clif Parkhill, Jr. of Oxnard, CA; great-nephews, Brandon Hulse of Marquette, KS, Lance Hulse of Tipton, KS, and Matthew (Diane) Wickstrom of Marquette, KS; great-great-niece, Kimber Grace Wickstrom; great-great-nephew, John David Wickstrom; step-son, Alson Nolan, III of Mesquite, TX; step-grandsons, Jeffrey (Lea) Nolan of Fairview, TX and Michael Patrick Nolan of Allen, TX; step-great-grandson, Parker Scott (Olivia) Nolan of Anna, TX; and many extended family and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband; brother & sister-in-law, Bertis & Joan Wickstrom; sister & brother-in-law, Eileen & C.A. Parkhill; and nephews, Eric Lyle Parkhill and David Wickstrom & wife, Peggy.