



## Mrs. Eleanor C. (Manning) (Sullivan) Donahue

January 17, 1922 - August 15, 2014

Eleanor C. Donahue

Matriarch of a well-known Lowell Family

Former Co-Owner of James A. Manning Liquor Company

Mom, Nana, Big Nana, El, Eleanor, and Aunt Eleanor- Eleanor C. Donahue answered to all of these names to all who knew and loved her. El wore many hats and had many titles but her strong Catholic Faith, pride in her Irish Heritage, deep love for her family and friends and her generous spirit showed through in all aspects of her life. She was a woman of great strength, strong opinions, and as her 3 children put it, “did not mince words”. She was the matriarch of her family and her influence and love has spanned four generations. She will forever be a presence in the Donahue and Rourke families.

Eleanor Catherine Manning was born on January 17, 1922 to James and Katherine (McDermott) Manning. She joined her brother James who was 3 years her elder. After living in the Centralville section of Lowell, the family moved to Dracut. Eleanor called this house home for the remainder of her life. She raised her children, Kathy, James, and Michael here. It was through her brother that she met William Sullivan. Bill and Eleanor shared a true love story and were married in October of 1950. They were married until cancer tragically took Bill at age 36 when their daughter Kathy was only 15 months old. Eleanor cared for Bill throughout his illness and cherished every moment they had in their short marriage.

It was at the family home that Eleanor took care of her grandchildren, had sleepovers with them, and it was here that she hosted cookouts by the pool every Sunday afternoon for her friends and family. Those Sundays were legendary and only those who attended could truly understand the nostalgia “the pool” holds. A Sunday was never complete without her husband, children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews lining up at the end of the driveway to the tunes of Mr. Softie and getting to enjoy ice cream. Eleanor also hosted holidays here. Christmas Day always had a large group of family and close friends eating dinner, meat pies, and ending with presents and piano playing in the living room. She was a gracious hostess who thrived being surrounded by her family and friends.

Eleanor attended St. Michael's Grammar School and then Keith Hall. Keith Hall is where she met lifelong friend Alice Sullivan. She and Alice raised their families together, vacationed in Florida together and enjoyed their later years with each other. The two had a beautiful friendship and a loving bond. After graduating from Keith Hall, Eleanor attended Bradshaw Business School in Lowell. Eleanor began her business career at a young age working at her parent's Variety Store on Bridge Street. This Variety Store would later become J.A. Manning Liquor Company after being one of the first business in Lowell to obtain a liquor license following the end of Prohibition. At a young age Eleanor had a strong work ethic and a business sense. The package store also led her to William Donahue. Bill made deliveries to the package store regularly and the two fell in love and were married in April 16, 1960.

They were married for 30 years until Bill lost his battle with cancer in 1990. They shared a love of travel and went on many trips together including California, Las Vegas, Florida, many European countries, and numerous trips to Ireland. Eleanor and Bill loved their New England Sports Teams, especially the Red Sox. Their trips to Florida often included a visit to Spring Training. At any age, Nana could give statistics on the Red Sox players, give their ranking, and could critique the coaching of her beloved Patriots. On Sundays at the pool you could be assured that the garage AM radio was on and the crackled sounds of the Red Sox game was coming through to the yard.

EI made many lasting friendships at the package store and many people she employed became part of her family. Eleanor met Bob and Jan Lekites here. EI and Jan enjoyed a friendship that lasted over 50 years. They shared many days at the pool, watched each other's children and grandchildren grow up and, as only lifelong friends can do, shared much laughter and heartache together.

At her very core, Eleanor was a Nana. Her six grandchildren, Sean, Ryan, Katie, Meghan, Kyle and Timothy were all the recipients of Nana's love and support. Her pride showed in every tennis match, dance recital, baseball game, basketball game or volleyball game. She attended plays, ceremonies, sacraments, preschool, kindergarten, high school and college graduations. Nana traveled with her grandchildren to Ireland, California, Florida, and to New York. She had a passion for New York City, the Theatre and NYC shopping.

In 2001 the Merrimack College Girl's Tennis Team recognized Eleanor by giving her the "Outstanding Fan" Award. She cheered the loudest and attended all matches- even traveling to away matches. She was known to see all the Merrimack players shots as "in" despite what the line judge had seen. In true EI fashion, these thoughts were not shared quietly.

She loved her grandchildren deeply and in turn they had a love and respect for her. Nana later became known as Big Nana as her grandchildren began having children. Jack, Ava, Caroline, Finnegan, Brogan and Zoey were all blessed to have shared in Big Nana's admiration and love. As with her grandchildren she attended all events, all holidays, all recitals, and basked in their presence. A whole new generation was around to share in Pony Boy, being called Tootsie, and to be given \$5.00 bills just for stopping by to say hi and give a hug and a kiss. Big Nana would have welcomed her 7th great grandchild this December. Her presence will be felt in this new baby girl.

Eleanor was a Nana that kept up with the times. She could speak to any of the Kardashian's shenanigans, or discuss the latest tragedy on Downton Abby. She knew who was divorcing who according to US Weekly and knew who had a number one movie. Not many women in their eighties were at the Theatre during the opening weekend of Sex and the City, but Eleanor was!

She loved reading novels, enjoyed knitting and especially loved going out to eat. She was a fan of Tony Bennett, Frank Sinatra, and all Big Band Music. Her generosity spread to many charities and foundations. Eleanor was particularly fond of St. Jude's Charities and prayed regularly to St. Jude and St. Anthony. Eleanor attended weekly Mass until she was no longer able, at which time she watched daily Mass on TV and prayed the Rosary for special intentions. Eleanor was a past member of The Massachusetts Package Store Association and Altrusa Business Woman's Association.

Eleanor lived her 92 years with faith, love, hard work, and dedication to what was in front of her. She will be missed but her presence will be felt by the generations she has left behind.

"Our power lies in our small daily choices one after another to create eternal ripples of a life well lived."

The family would like to extend a special thank you to Melissa, Terry, and especially Ching for their exceptional care, kindness, and compassion for Eleanor.

Eleanor is survived by her daughter Kathy (Sullivan) Rourke and her husband Jimmy of Lowell; her sons, James Donahue of Dracut and his fiancée June Hinds of Framingham, and Michael Donahue and his wife Amy of Dracut; her grandchildren Sean Rourke and his wife Erin of Lowell, Ryan Rourke and his wife Courtney of Dracut, Katie Branco and her husband Kevin of Lowell, Meghan Rourke of Tewksbury, Kyle Donahue and Timothy Donahue of Dracut ; her great grandchildren, Jack, Ava, Caroline, Finnegan, and Brogan Rourke of Lowell and Zoey Rourke of Dracut. She is also survived by many dear nieces,

nephews, and cousins.

Eleanor was the sister of the late James C. Manning.

## FUNERAL NOTICE

DONAHUE—In Lowell, August 15, 2014 following a brief illness, Eleanor C. (Manning) (Sullivan) Donahue, 92, a Dracut Resident.

Family and friends may call at the FAY McCABE FUNERAL HOME, 105 MOORE STREET, LOWELL, on MONDAY, August 18 from 4 until 8 P.M. Eleanor's Funeral will begin on TUESDAY MORNING at 9 o'clock from the Funeral Home followed by her Funeral Mass at 10 o'clock at The Immaculate Conception Church, (lower church) 144 East Merrimack St. Lowell. Her burial will follow at St. Mary's Cemetery.

As an expression of sympathy, donations in Eleanor's memory may be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital 262 Danny Thomas Place, Memphis, Tennessee 38105.

ARRANGEMENTS BY THE FAY McCABE FUNERAL DIRECTORS, 978-459-9222.

[www.faymccabe.com](http://www.faymccabe.com)

# Cemetery

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## St. Mary Cemetery

90 River Road

North Tewksbury, MA, 01876

# Events

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**AUG** **Calling Hours** 04:00PM - 08:00PM

**18**

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Fay McCabe Funeral Home

105 Moore Street, Lowell, MA, US, 01852

**AUG** **Funeral Mass** 10:00AM

**19**

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Immaculate Conception Church

144 East Merrimack Street, Lowell, MA, US, 01852

**AUG** **Burial** 11:30AM

**19**

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St. Mary Cemetery

90 River Road, North Tewksbury, MA, US, 01876

# Comments

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“ Kathy just returned home from vacation to find the sad news of your mom passing. she was a sweetheart an I loved talking about the old days when I would run into her! My deepest sympathy to you an the boys. I will keep each of you in my prayers daily full knowing EI will always be by your side! Love, Marg an Ernie Hogan

**Marguerite Hogan Ernie Hogan** - September 07, 2014 at 02:56 PM

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“ To Mrs. Rourke,

I'm sorry for the loss of your mother, Eleanor. Your mother seemed like a remarkable woman who lived life to the fullest! I wish I could've met her. I hope all the beautiful memories you and your family share of your mom will comfort you at this time. She will always be within you. Please accept my condolences; God Bless.

With Love,

Kenny O. (former student from the Robinson)

**Ken Onyechi** - August 22, 2014 at 04:42 PM

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“ Sean & Erin Rourke lit a candle in memory of Mrs. Eleanor C. (Manning) (Sullivan) Donahue



**Sean & Erin Rourke** - August 17, 2014 at 01:26 PM