



## Mary Ruh Urfer

July 15, 1922 - January 26, 2013

### Service Information

Visitation: Thursday, January 31, 2013. 5:30 - 8 p.m.

Funeral: Friday, 10:30 a.m.

Burial: Acacia Park Cemetery

Mary Ruh Urfer, 90, formerly of Morton Grove, IL passed away at the Village at Victory Lakes Nursing Center in Lindenhurst, IL on Saturday, January 26, 2013.

Mary Elaine Ruh was born on July 15th, 1922 to William Ruh and Gertrude Precht. When Mary was born, the family lived in a nice three flat stone building on Ashland Ave. in Chicago. Times were good and work was plentiful.

Mary was the eldest of three children. She had two brothers, William and Robert. In 1928, when Mary was six years old, the family moved to Norwood Park. When her brother Bill was a baby, her father (a plumber by trade) was scalded with acid at work. He was injured badly, so he was laid up for an entire year. During that time, the 1929 stock market crash occurred, banks went under and her parents lost what little savings that they had. From that time on, the family was imprisoned in the financial turmoil of the Great Depression.

They moved frequently and Mary had to change schools often. Work was scarce but Mary's father would repair old plumbing in buildings in exchange for rent. Mary loved to tell the story of their hard coal heater that heated their apartment.

When times were hard Mary's father would go out with a cloth sack and walk along the railroad tracks in hope of finding coal that had tumbled off of the coal cars. Their night time excursions to the railroad track often ended in laughing fits! The bag full of "coal" that they had hoped to use to heat their house was often full of everything but coal! They would empty out the sacks and find an equal amount of rocks, debris, and hunks of concrete. They would sit on the floor together and sort it all out. She believed that it was their ability to laugh and find humor in discouraging things that helped them get through trying times.

She also remembered getting up in the early morning in a very cold house. She would have to grab her clothes and get dressed in the corner of the house, behind the coal stove to keep warm.

Times were hard, and from time to time, other relatives lived with her family. She remembered Uncle Walter and Uncle Herman (her mother's brothers) and Uncle Herman's two daughters Charlotte and Winnifred living with them for a time. Charlotte and Mary were close in age, and she found that it was fun to have "a sister" for a while.

Mary was twelve when her brother Bob was born in 1930. It was the height of the Great Depression. Mary's father took any job that he could find, and often worked for food instead of money. Baby Bobby was a delight, and entertained the family, and lifted their spirits.

The economy slowly improved, and Mary entered Waller High School. Her childhood was hard, but it instilled in her strength, positivity, good values, and independence. The family moved to Seminary Ave. which was closer to Mary's school and their church, Lakeview Congregational Church. It was here

that she worked in a church youth group and met Clarence Urfer. He worked as president of the group, and she as the secretary.

At 17, her senior year in high school, Mary became engaged to a boy named Jimmy. As she was still in high school, her parent insisted on a long engagement. Jimmy was a well-liked, popular guy, but not very responsible. They set goals to save money for a place to live, but Jimmy never seemed to save a dime. After a two year engagement, Mary broke it off.

At church, Clarence noticed that Mary was no longer wearing her engagement ring, and asked her what had happened. She told him that it was a long story. He asked if he could walk her home, so that they could talk, and she agreed. When Clarence hung around talking to others after church, Mary got tired of waiting for him, and left the meeting. He chased her down when she was almost home, and asked if they could walk the long way around so they could have their talk. And so it began- they started dating.

In 1940 the economy was improving and Mary's father bought a house on Kilpatrick Ave. moving farther away. Clarence continued to date Mary, commuting by bus to see her. Clar managed the A&P grocery store, and Mary worked as a legal secretary downtown. They shared time at church group outings, and their dates often took them to the Empire Room at the Palmer House, where they danced the night away. Mary fondly remembered that Clar tramped out "I love you Mary" in the snow one winter.

They became engaged, but Clar went to war in 1943. They married on February 3rd 1945 while Clar was home on a long furlough. Mary was such an independent, strong woman, she agreed to "Love, honor, and cherish" in her wedding vows, but not to "Obey." That was unheard of back then! The minister was shocked, but Clar was fine with it. Clar then went back to Alaska where

he was stationed, and Mary stayed home with her family. In 1946, when Clar was discharged from the army, his troop train passed by Mary's Kilpatrick house on their way to Fort Sheridan. The train he was on was stopped to let another train pass, when he noticed Mary in her yard hanging laundry on the clothesline. Clar tried to get her attention. When he told the other guys that she was his girl, they all started hollering to get her to look. Not realizing Clar was there, Mary turned her back to the train, and ignored them!

After the war, Mary and Clar lived with Mary's parents for a year before buying their own first home on Lotus Ave. in Chicago.

They purchased their larger home in Morton Grove when they began their family, and spent the rest of their lives together there. They raised two daughters Jane and Julie who in turn blessed them with three beautiful grandchildren; Serena, Alyssa, and Rachel.

Mary loved the role of homemaker and enjoyed having the extended family at every holiday. She loved fine china, crystal and silver, and loved to entertain. Blue & white dishes were also a love of hers. They filled her home, along with other beautiful artifacts. She also enjoyed antiques, and was an avid collector. She amassed an amazing collection of powder compacts and purses. She absolutely loved the hunt, and often found treasured pieces for pennies at thrift shops and garage sales.

Mary & Clar loved to travel! They budgeted their money tightly each year to allow them to take a driving vacation every summer with the girls & Mary's mother. They had a United States map hanging in their home that tracked their journeys, along with circled areas where their old cars had broken down along the way! They visited nearly every state in the United States, Mexico, Canada, Europe, Greece, and the Caribbean.

Her professional career included working as a legal secretary, working in a patent office, and being an office manager for a tile and carpet business. She loved everything she did, and was a responsible and organized employee.

She also created beautifully crafted handiwork. She was famous for her quilting, needlepoint, sewing, knitting, and crocheting.

Mary was very active in Girl Scouts for many years. She was a troop leader and worked tirelessly to enrich the lives of the girls in her troop. She kept in touch with her co-leader Barbara, and several of her girl scouts throughout her lifetime.

She was witty and smart, and always quick with a comeback! She loved proverbs and sayings, and compiled a book of her favorites which she used often. Mary was a natural born storyteller, and those of us who sat around her table will always remember her humorous tales told after dinner as we passed the time until dessert. Ah yes, dessert.... Who can forget the chocolate lover in Mary and all the beautiful cakes and pastries she created throughout the years.

We are not here today to mourn Mary's passing, but to celebrate her long and wonderful life! She has completed her circle of life in this world. Take comfort in knowing that she is re-uniting in Heaven with her loving husband Clarence, as they continue their travels together. February 3rd is Mary and Clar's 68th wedding anniversary and she is back in Clar's loving arms again! Theirs was a true and everlasting love!

We must continue to gather as a family together in Mary's honor. She touched many a heart and was an amazing woman! We will never forget her!

She is survived by her daughters Jane (Randy) Urfer-McClintick of California

and Julie Urfer Froehlich of Lake Villa; grandchildren Serena, Alyssa, and Rachel; and brother Robert (Diane) Ruh.

She was preceded in death by her husband Clarence and by her brother William Ruh.

A funeral service will begin at 10:30 a.m. on Friday, February 1, 2013 at Ringa Funeral Home, 122 S. Milwaukee Ave. (IL Rte 83), Lake Villa, IL 60046. Burial will take place after the funeral service at Acacia Park Cemetery in Chicago, IL. Visitation will be from 5:30 - 8 p.m. on Thursday at the funeral home. Please consider a memorial in Mary's name to the Girl Scouts (<http://www.girlscouts.org/support/>). Flowers are also accepted.

# Cemetery Details

## Acacia Park Cemetery

7800 West Irving Park Road  
Chicago, IL 60706

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JAN 31. 5:30 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Ringa Funeral Home  
122 S. Milwaukee Ave.  
Lake Villa, IL 60046  
(847) 356-2146  
info@ringafuneralhome.com  
<https://www.ringafuneralhome.com>

## Service

FEB 1. 10:30 AM (CT)

Ringa Funeral Home  
122 S. Milwaukee Ave.  
Lake Villa, IL 60046  
(847) 356-2146  
info@ringafuneralhome.com  
<https://www.ringafuneralhome.com>

## Burial

FEB 1. 12:00 PM (CT)

Acacia Park Cemetery  
7800 West Irving Park Road  
Chicago, IL 60706

# Tribute Wall



“ *Mary Ruh Urfer*

October 04, 2023 at 02:13 PM



“ *Mary Ruh Urfer*

December 31, 2022 at 11:36 AM



“ *My condolences to Jane and family. I was a scout in Mary Urfer's troop in Morton Grove and I have very fond and indelible memories of Mrs. Urfer. I appreciate the time she spent and great spirit she had giving us such wonderful childhood experiences. I remember her in her green uniform with the skirt and the peplum top. What a great role model. I won't forget her. Thank you, Mrs. Urfer! Idele Weinberg*

idele weinberg crimmins - April 20, 2016 at 10:49 PM



“ *Just got a card from my wonderful neighbors the Battaglias. They are making a donation to the Girl Scouts in Moms honor! Thank you Sam & Bev!*

Julie Froehlich - January 31, 2013 at 03:11 PM

BM

“ *Barb Milecki lit a candle in memory of Mary Ruh Urfer*



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**Barb Milecki** - January 30, 2013 at 01:51 AM

BM

“ *Mary, you taught me everything I know about Girl Scouting. You were a patient teacher. I'll miss having lunch with you and Julie. Your co-leader Barb Milecki*

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**Barb Milecki** - January 30, 2013 at 01:50 AM

AR

“ *Aunt Mary has been in my life 40 years, she has been my friend, my aunt, my mother when my mother was no longer with me.. Aunt Mary has been my children`s grandmother and friend.. I have learned so much from her. I have learned how to keep family close and the value of spending time with those you love. We shared a great many sorrows together and a great many laughs and special moments.... We shared the love of a good piece of chocolate, and it is ok to have dessert anytime!!!!!!!!!!!!!! I love her and will miss her greatly, but she will live in my heart forever. Adrienne*

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**Adrienne Ruh** - January 29, 2013 at 08:33 PM

JF

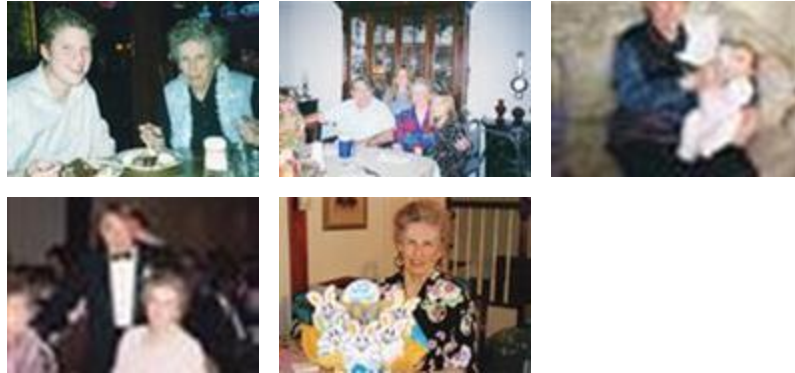
*Adrienne, you were a daughtr to her & she loved you very much!*

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**Julie Froehlich** - January 29, 2013 at 09:47 PM

KR

“ I will miss my "Chocolate Buddy"...



Kristyn Ruh - January 29, 2013 at 08:22 PM

JF

Thanks for the photos Kristyn! Havent seen any of those! Especially love the one with Mia & you guys sharing dessert!!

Julie Froehlich - January 29, 2013 at 09:51 PM

PS

“ Penny Schmid lit a candle in memory of Mary Ruh Urfer



Penny Schmid - January 29, 2013 at 04:36 PM



Like Karen, I too have fond memories of Mrs. Urfer as my Girl Scouts leader. Sometimes it doesn't seem quite as long ago as it really is. We really did have some great scouting moments. My sympathies to her loving family at their loss.

Penny Schmid - January 29, 2013 at 04:43 PM

JF

*Penny, after tagging along with my sister's troop, my own Girl Scout experience could not compare! Thank you so much for sending Mom your tribute!*

Julie Froehlich - January 29, 2013 at 09:57 PM

KG

“ *Karen Grobner lit a candle in memory of Mary Ruh Urfer*



Karen Grobner - January 29, 2013 at 12:35 AM

KG

“ *I have known Mrs Urfer since the 5th grade when I joined the girl scout troop that she lead.. we did all kinds of cool camping trips and girl scout badge ideas through the years. I staying in girl scouts until the end of high school because of her influence.. through my adult years i have sent her photos of my children growing up and then moving to California also of my grandchildren. I wish I had kept in better touch, but never seem to happen.. I love you Mary and I know you are in a great place now.*  
*Karen Grobner*

Karen Grobner - January 29, 2013 at 12:34 AM

JF

*Thanks for thinking of her, you gave her plenty of attention & she loved getting your cards with pictures!*

Julie Froehlich - January 29, 2013 at 09:54 PM

LC

“ Aunt Mary, we will miss you and love you. Thank you for always being so kind and welcoming. Rest in love. Lauren Chaney



Lauren Chaney - January 28, 2013 at 06:14 PM



“ Pink Tribute Spray was purchased for the family of Mary Ruh Urfer.



January 28, 2013 at 04:20 PM

JF

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Julie Froehlich - January 28, 2013 at 04:01 PM

RF

“ Please feel free to add to Mary's family tree by clicking on the "Family Tree" tab above! You can click on the green plus sign on the bottom of a person's picture, or edit your own profile to add more information. Thank you!

-Rachel

Rachel Froehlich - January 28, 2013 at 03:55 PM

BR

“ On behalf of the staff at Ringa Funeral Home, we'd like to express our condolences to Mary's family. It is a privilege to serve your family during this time.



Bob and Andrew Ringa - January 28, 2013 at 02:22 PM



“ 4 files added to the album Memories Album



Ringa Funeral Home and Cremation Service - January 28, 2013 at 01:43 PM

JD

“ Rest peacefully Sweet Lady, I know you'll be watching over me!  
Love, Julie <3

Julie Froehlich / Marys daughter - January 28, 2013 at 01:25 PM

NA

The Urfer and the Allweiss families have been dear friends for many years. I cherish those memories. Norma

Norma Allweiss - February 01, 2013 at 09:38 AM