



Patricia K. Watkins

July 16, 1930 - January 25, 2014

Patricia Kelsey Watkins — journalist, wife, mother and proud native Hoosier — died at age 83 on Jan. 25, 2014, in Toledo. Her newspaper career began at age 10 with a family newsletter in her hometown of Roanoke, Ind., blossomed (along with a romance that led to a 54-year marriage) at the Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette and, after a second career as wife and mother, culminated in the editorship of the Perrysburg Messenger Journal.

Pat was born July 16, 1930, in Roanoke to Hilda and Floyd Kelsey. Not content with writing solely for her parents and five siblings, she wrote stories for her classmates and a school news column for the local paper. She hit the big time — at least by the standards of her youthful peers — when she landed a job as a drugstore soda jerk at a wage of 20 cents an hour, all the ice cream she could eat, and a prime spot at the nucleus of the town’s teenage social scene. She had a brush with future celebrity when she met James Dean, then a high school student from Fairmount, Ind., during a field trip to Indianapolis. Though her drugstore job earned her status as an “apprentice pharmacist” in Indiana, the writing bug was strong and Pat decided to study journalism at Indiana University and work at the campus paper, the Indiana Daily Student. After graduation in 1952, she was hired by the Journal-Gazette to write for the “women’s page.” One of her assignments was covering the work of Dr. Alfred Kinsey, of Kinsey Report fame. It wasn’t long before a young Korean War veteran and newly hired reporter named H. Griffin Watkins took the desk across the aisle. She and Griff were married in 1956.

Pat moved to Toledo when Griff took a job with Flournoy & Gibbs, a leading public relations firm in the area. She became a full-time wife and mother, pouring all her love and care into raising their three children. As a volunteer at St. Patrick of Heatherdowns parish, she made friendships that lasted a lifetime. Pat also volunteered at her children's high schools: St. John's Jesuit, where she edited the parent newsletter (and was proud to have titled it "Vox Mom") and now-defunct McAuley, where she put her organizing skills to work on the annual carnival. She also volunteered at Mobile Meals, MCO hospital and Hospice of Northwest Ohio.

Pat's generosity with her time and talents did not stop with community service. Friends and relatives were the happy beneficiaries of her needlework skills; the personalized Christmas stockings she knitted are still hung on many a chimney with care. Every holiday season, friends anticipated the arrival of Pat's homemade fudge, and her kids gladly gobbled up the rare batch that didn't quite set right.

After her children grew up, Pat returned to the workforce and joined the weekly Perrysburg Messenger Journal. She covered everything from Harrison Rally Day to local politics, and her reporting got her in enough hot water that she retained a home security service — a badge of honor in the news business. In 1995 she won a Crystal Award of Merit from the Association for Women in Communications. She retired as editor of the paper.

Though the extent of her Irish heritage was dubious, the Emerald Isle was Pat's spiritual homeland. She visited Ireland numerous times, most recently and memorably in 2011 with her children, their spouses and her cherished grandson. Closer to home, her passions included reading, golf, collecting interesting obituaries, and a succession of beloved dogs.

Pat is survived by sons Daniel K. Watkins (Sarah) and John G. Watkins (Mona) of Toledo; daughter Nancy G. Watkins (Brian Lavelle) of Chicago; grandson Griffin P. Wood of Chicago; sisters Phyllis Witherow of Roanoke and Barbara (Jim) Graham of Troy, Ohio; and brothers Robert (Nancy) Kelsey and Duane Kelsey, all of Roanoke. She also leaves many loving nieces and

nephews. Preceding her in death were her husband, Griff, and a brother, Floyd Kelsey.

Visitation will be held from 4 to 8 p.m. Friday, Jan. 31, at the Coyle Funeral Home, 1770 S. Reynolds Road, Toledo. Family and friends are invited to say a few words at 7 p.m. if they wish. A Memorial Mass will be celebrated at 11 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 1, at the Historic Church of St. Patrick, 130 Avondale Ave., Toledo, with visitation at the church for an hour before the Mass.

Preferred memorials are the Historic Church of St. Patrick and Hospice of Northwest Ohio, 30000 E. River Road, Perrysburg, OH 43551. Please view and sign our online "guest registry" at CoyleFuneralHome.com

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN 31. 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Coyle Funeral and Cremation Services
1770 S. Reynolds Road
Toledo, OH 43614
(419) 865-1295
<https://www.coylefuneralhome.com>

Tribute Wall

KA

“ *Miss (Molly) -
I was out of town and just today got caught up on reading the paper.
I'm so sorry about the loss of Aunt Pat. I know how close you and
the rest of the family were to her. We're loosing that generation and
it's hard to take. Kay Anderson*

Kay Anderson - February 08, 2014 at 10:03 AM

SM

“ *I worked with Pat at the Perrysburg Messenger and shared many an
enjoyable lunch with her. Pat was always interesting, quick to laugh
and the voice of sanity in our workplace. She was very proud of her
family and rightly so. She was a very special lady and I admired her
very much. My sympathies on this great loss!*

Sharon Midgley - February 06, 2014 at 09:29 AM

CN

“ *My sincerest sympathy to all of the Watkins
family in the death of your Mom. She was
truly an extraordinary lady and I loved being
around her and having her as a friend.
Unfortunately, I will not be able to be with you
at the services, but know you will be in my thoughts and prayers this
weekend. Carole Nemeth*



Carole Nemeth - February 01, 2014 at 09:39 AM

RW

“ Pat was such a strong and caring woman and will be missed by many. A wonderful mother and grandmother to Griffin Paul.

Randy Wood
Chicago

Randy Wood - February 01, 2014 at 08:05 AM

PW

“ Nancy, so sorry to hear about your mom, she was such a vital person, I know she will be missed, Pat and Gene Welsh, Avon, Ohio

Pat Welsh - January 31, 2014 at 12:32 PM

LB

“ Mary, Gretchen, David and Molly, So sorry to hear of the loss of your dear Aunt Pat. My prayers to all of the family at this time.

Sincerely,
Laura Mack Brogan
Perrysburg, Ohio

Laura Mack Brogan - January 31, 2014 at 07:05 AM

NR

“ Nadia and Richard purchased the Imagination Blooms for the family of Patricia K. Watkins.



Nadia and Richard - January 30, 2014 at 05:22 PM

DW

“ Aunt Pat was a wonderful and fun person to be around. She will be missed by many,

David & Kelley Wassermann - January 30, 2014 at 03:52 PM

DS

“ Our condolences to you Danny, John, Nancy and Griff and to Pat's entire family. It is difficult to say goodbye to our dear friend of 50 years. Beautiful picture, obituary, Church. May heaven have welcomed you, Pat, with a chorus of alleluias! Dorothy and Frank Sullivan: Hingham, MA

Dorothy Frank Sullivan - January 29, 2014 at 02:49 PM

CO

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Coyle - January 29, 2014 at 02:20 PM

DS

What a cutie pie!

Dorothy Frank Sullivan - January 29, 2014 at 02:56 PM

FB

“ From your colleagues at Crain's Chicago Business purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Patricia K. Watkins.



From your colleagues at Crain's Chicago Business - January 29, 2014 at 10:31 AM

PH

“ Your mother was such a beautiful and talented lady, Nancy She and Griff raised a beautiful and talented family. The obituary is a wonderful tribute to her.

Phyllis - January 28, 2014 at 09:41 PM

KR

“ We will always remember her as a loving, talented, witty, and so darn smart aunt. I can hear her laughter. We will miss her greatly. Prayers to Dan, Sara, John, Mona, Nancy, Brian and Griffin. Kristi and Tom and family

kristi - January 28, 2014 at 05:09 PM

DJ

“ Nancy, Joe and I are sending loving thoughts and prayers to you and all your family. Wonderful obituary. Per usual, your mom would be very proud of you.

Denise Joyce - January 28, 2014 at 04:25 PM