



## Mary Ellen Best

June 29, 1938 - October 23, 2025

### Mary Ellen Best

Mary was born on June 29, 1938, to Rose Marie (Cronin) and Floyd Eichhorn in Pipestone, Minnesota. She was raised in a generous home despite her family having very limited resources. She lived her life according to Catholic principles. The lessons that shaped her character came from her parents: her mother, Rose, would bring water to people experiencing homelessness who traveled by rail, and her father, Floyd, shared food with strangers even when food was scarce. Their belief that “there is always someone in greater need” was an ethic Mary carried quietly and passed on to her own family.

Mary attended parochial school and was a graduate of Lake City High School in 1956.

### Early Adulthood

Mary married James Best in September 1958. In January 1959, shortly after the marriage, James was called to deploy in the U.S. Navy in the Mediterranean. Mary stayed behind and gave birth to their daughter, Jennifer, in March 1959.

At that time, Mary was living with her in-laws. In August 1959, with the help of her brother Johnny, she relocated to Jacksonville, Florida — just in time to experience her first hurricane.

When James was discharged in 1959, the young family moved to Nelson, Wisconsin, where James worked for Burlington Northern Railroad. The family

grew in 1961 with the birth of their son Jon. Later that year, the family relocated to Mary's hometown of Lake City, Minnesota. In 1964, they moved to Winona, Minnesota, while James attended college. During this time, Mary supported the family by working at St. Anne's Hospice as a nurse aide. In 1966, the family moved to Rochester, Minnesota, after James accepted a job with IBM, shortly before the birth of their third child, James. They remained there until 1973, when James accepted a promotion and the family relocated to Austin, Texas.

### Home Life

Mary loved to cook and provide for her family, especially for the holidays. She loved making pies and roast beef — foods that had been rare luxuries in her own childhood.

Mary was insightful, ethical, and compassionate. She spoke up when she saw someone else being treated unfairly. She was always the protector — perhaps not always as much when the hurt was directed at her.

Mary was a good sport. She would try anything. She loved to camp and travel, and throughout her life she visited many national and state parks.

She loved the water and she especially loved water skiing, which she continued to enjoy into her mid-50s. She also loved the Texas Gulf Coast during her many years in Texas.

### Adult Life

In 1979, Mary became a vocational nurse after graduating from Austin Community College's Vocational Nursing Program. She cared for geriatric patients in skilled home health nursing. Before becoming a nurse, Mary worked in food services for the Austin Independent School District.

Mary was a Cub Scout mom, helping neighborhood kids learn values and skills. She also led by quiet example. She instilled values without seeking recognition — for example, having her family help blind parishioners from St. Louis Catholic Church in Austin get to Mass, guiding them onto buses, helping

them into their pews, and making sure they got safely back home.

### Later in Life

As a grandmother, Mary was very close to her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She was always supportive and involved in their activities, and she attended their events whenever she could. She always remembered special occasions and important moments in their lives.

Mary and James eventually left Austin and moved nearby to Lexington, Texas. There, she was an active participant in the Holy Family Altar Society. She was also a founding parishioner of Holy Family Catholic Mission, helping guide it from a portable building to the church building we are in today.

Mary and James relocated to Round Rock, Texas in November 2023 to be near their family as Mary managed health issues after being diagnosed with cancer in 2018. Mary passed away October 23, 2025, surrounded by those she loved and loved her. She is survived by her beloved husband and caregiver, James, three children and their spouses, seven grandchildren, and three great grandchildren. Mary was preceded in death by her parents and beloved siblings, Grace Dick and John Eichhorn.

In memory of Mary's generous spirit, donations are encouraged to the National PKU Alliance ([npkua.org](http://npkua.org)), a cause close to her heart.

<https://www.npkua.org/donate/>

# Previous Events

## Visitation

OCT **28**. 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Phillips & Luckey Funeral Home  
1041 US-79  
Rockdale, TX 76567-4513  
(512) 446-5454

## Rosary

OCT **28**. 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Phillips & Luckey Funeral Home  
1041 US-79  
Rockdale, TX 76567-4513  
(512) 446-5454

## Funeral Mass

OCT **29**. 1:00 PM (CT)

Holy Family Catholic Church  
1027 East FM 696  
Lexington, TX 78947

# Tribute Wall

TC

“ *Mary Ellen was my last first cousin on the Eichhorn side of my family. I enjoyed visiting with Jim and her on my trips to Texas. Our family loved going to Lake City MN on our family vacations almost every summer while I was growing up. May she rest in peace.* ”

Terry Eichhorn Carson - October 30, 2025 at 04:14 PM

TF

“ *The Scully family purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Mary Ellen Best.* ”



The Scully family - October 28, 2025 at 11:25 AM

AK

“ *Our thoughts and prayers for Jim and the family. Ron & Anita Kohlin* ”



Anita Kohlin - October 27, 2025 at 08:52 PM



“ *Blue Caribbean Bouquet was purchased for the family of Mary Ellen Best.* ”



October 27, 2025 at 03:49 PM



“ *Arrive in Style* was purchased for the family of Mary Ellen Best.



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October 27, 2025 at 01:56 PM



“ *Holy Family Catholic Church* purchased the *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* for the family of Mary Ellen Best.



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**Holy Family Catholic Church** - October 27, 2025 at 01:40 PM



“ *Pat and Dawn Dilger* purchased the *Emerald Garden Basket* for the family of Mary Ellen Best.



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**Pat and Dawn Dilger** - October 25, 2025 at 09:16 PM