



Mary Lu Pool

AUG 19, 1949 - JUL 1, 2025



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Mary Lu Pool (née O’Leary) of Milton, Delaware, passed away after a brief illness on July 1, 2025, at Beebe Hospital in Lewes with her family by her side. She was 75.

Mary Lu was born on August 19, 1949, in Springfield, Massachusetts, to the late Daniel O’Leary and Stasia O’Leary (née Bednarz). She grew up in Newburgh, New York, spending many wonderful summers with her parents, three brothers, and countless aunts, uncles, and cousins at the “Big Camp,” a family property in the Catskills.

After graduating high school, Mary Lu moved to Baltimore and attended the College of Notre Dame of Maryland, earning a Bachelor of Arts in History and Political Science. While in college, she met her future husband Leroy “Roy” Pool, who studied at the nearby Johns Hopkins University. Following her marriage in 1969, Mary Lu settled in rural Maryland and embarked on a 40-year teaching career with Baltimore County Public Schools (Inverness and Sparks Elementary Schools). During her time as a teacher, she engendered a love of reading and creative writing in generations of students and developed many life-long friendships with colleagues.

The 1980s and 1990s were a time of significant change for Mary Lu. She had a son – one of the great joys of her life – earned a Masters of Education from Towson University, took up photography and scuba diving, and began traveling all over the world, from islands across the Caribbean to the savannas of East Africa to the rainforests of Central America. Through these experiences, Mary Lu developed a keen interest in protecting the environment and helping those in need. While her marriage to Roy ended in divorce, the pair eventually rebuilt their relationship and developed a beautiful friendship that would last for the rest of Mary Lu’s life.

In early 2014, Mary Lu retired from teaching and moved to Milton to enjoy life near the Delaware beaches. She joined the Coastal Camera Club, rode her bike along the region’s many trails and paths, made delightful new friendships, and continued traveling widely. In late 2017, however, Mary Lu suddenly lost the ability to speak and was diagnosed with Stage IV lung cancer that had



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spread to her brain, despite being a non-smoker. Thanks to her experienced medical team, Mary Lu achieved a remarkable complete remission that lasted for the remainder of her life – more than 7 years. During her recovery from cancer, she learned to speak again and was soon back to doing what she loved most. In the years that followed, Mary Lu further honed her photography skills, ultimately displaying her work in multiple galleries and becoming the official photographer for the Historic Lewes Farmers Market.

The family wishes to express its gratitude to the doctors and nurses at Beebe Hospital for their profound kindness and their tireless efforts to try and keep Mary Lu alive.

Mary Lu was preceded in death by her parents and her brothers John O’Leary and Gerald “Gerry” O’Leary. She is survived by her son Jamie Pool and his husband Joshua Leibowitz, former husband Roy, brother Daniel O’Leary, sister-in-law Myra Byrnes O’Leary, niece Kathleen Finn (née O’Leary), and nephew Sean O’Leary. She is further survived by many siblings, nieces, and nephews through her former husband.

The family will have a memorial service at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donations to causes of importance to Mary Lu: the Johns Hopkins Kimmel Cancer Center <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/kimmel-cancer-center/make-a-gift>, or other research hospitals specializing in new cancer treatments, Church World Service, or a meaningful charity of your choice.

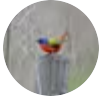
Please sign the tribute wall at this site.



Tribute Wall

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Mj Bushman posted:

I worked with MaryLu in the Baltimore County Public School system. We became friends. When we retired we both located near the MD/Del beaches. It was always fun to hear of her recent travels. Her photography was inspiring. MaryLu was fun and also dedicated to her profession and her students. She loved her son beyond measure. I miss her deeply. MJ Bushman

December 4 at 12:26 AM



Debbie Blair posted:

I am stunned and saddened to hear of Mary Lu's passing. Just recently in early June, I had the pleasure of going with her and other Coastal Club Camera members to the Ocean City, NJ Welcome Center to photograph the birds in the rookery. I got to know her better at our shared meals. She was a wonderful person who freely gave her advice to fellow photographers on how to improve their images. I will really miss her. My sincere condolences to her family, friends, and all who knew her. Debbie Blair

July 20 at 3:42 PM



Patricia Kearns posted:

We are so sorry for the passing of our friend. She will always be remembered by us. We enjoyed helping her get established in her home in Milton. Always the environmentalist to the end. God Bless her and her family. Pat and Linda

July 19 at 9:48 AM



Cynthia Campbell posted:

I enjoyed hearing stories of Mary Lu's travels at the Farmer's Market where I also volunteer. She sat down on her last Saturday at the Market, under the shade of the SNAP tent with us. Though she didn't feel well, she wanted to stay to take photos of a bee demonstration. She will be missed by all of us at the Lewes Farmer's Market! 🙏

July 17 at 3:50 PM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Mary by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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