

OBITUARIES

Monica Elena Sweeney

Oct. 8, 1937 – Aug. 22, 2023

Monica Sweeney (Mona, Mo, Nan), age 85, of Youngstown, passed away peacefully at her home on Aug. 22, 2023, while surrounded by her loving family.

She will be most remembered for her love and dedication to her family. She had a delicious cooking talent with a keen sense for good taste, etiquette, a tremendously calm demeanor, and an outsized generosity to her community, in particular, the local soccer families. Mona was a wonderful wife, mother, grandmother, nurse, cook, soccer superfan, philanthropist, community leader, friend, voice of reason, and dance partner to her late husband, Dr. Jack Sweeney.

Mona was born in Brooklyn on Oct. 8, 1937, the daughter of Angelo and Paula Cerina (Picchio). Mona grew up in Queens and attended The Mary Louis Academy before obtaining her nursing degree from Niagara University in 1955. Upon graduation, Mo worked as both a floor and public health nurse in New York City for five years. On June 25, 1961, she married Jack Sweeney, M.D., and they subsequently started a family. Mona and Jack welcomed five children together: Kathleen, Michael, John, Robert and Richard.

The Sweeney family moved to Lewiston in 1968 and then to Youngstown in 1973, where they ultimately settled on Lake Road. Mo served her community through the Lewiston Service Guild, Niagara Pioneer Soccer, and Lew-Port Soccer. She taught nursing skills to special needs students at Niagara University and also taught human growth and development in the Buffalo Catholic schools.

Mona served as the president of the Niagara Pioneer Soccer League for close to a decade, at which time the Niagara Pioneer Cup was founded. A premier soccer tournament on the East Coast, 2024 will mark the 40-year anniversary. She sat on the board of directors for the Western New York Junior Soccer League, which brought Eastern Regionals to Youngstown. Mo also helped establish the Lew-Port Cup in the early 1980s. Mona prepared many team spaghetti dinners during Lew-Port soccer's success. Her sauce came to be known as "Mo's Winning Sauce." Since the mid-'70s, Mo was a fixture on the sidelines of so many games. There was always a player on the field that she was connected to and



that she wanted to support.

Mona was a friend to many. People often sought her out for her opinions on life matters where she consistently offered sound, rational advice. Mo taught her family to prioritize being together, to value experiences over material things, and to always plan for a few more mouths at the table. She was an expert at calling in a crowd to her table, with a firm policy that there was "always room for more." At her table, she modeled for her children and grandchildren what it meant to be a good human, highlighting that selflessness can lead to a rewarding life.

Mom, Mo, Nan will be most remembered and missed for how she gave everything to her family. Her children and her grandchildren were fortunate to have her as a uniting presence in their lives. Memories of her hugs, kisses, smiles, and family dinners will never be forgotten by those who knew and loved her.

Mona is survived by her children: Kathleen, Michael, John (Kristen), Robert (Laura) and Richard (Katherine); and grandchildren: John (Vashti), Kathleen (Emmett), John, Margaret, Robert, Liam, Erin, Alastair, Owen, Ellabei and Campbell. She was preceded in death by her loving husband, John F. Sweeney, M.D.

Graveside services are private. An open gathering to celebrate Mona's life will be held from 2-5 p.m. Monday, Aug. 28, at the Youngstown Yacht Club.

Donations can be made in Mo's memory to Niagara Hospice (<https://www.niagarahospice.org/>) or Niagara University (<https://www.niagara.edu/>).

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