

NORA HOURIGAN (1927-2015)

By Nora's Family

Nora, our dear mother, was born in Kilworth, Co Cork on 17th June 1927 to parents Ellen and Thomas McGrath. She was one of twins. Sadly, her twin brother, Eddie, passed away at eight years of age from pneumonia, a complication from measles. Her only other sibling, a sister, Eily, was born five years after Nora. Her father, Thomas, was a master tailor, as was his father, James, before him. Her mother, Ellen, was a cook.

Her father was a well-known bag-pipe and melodeon player in the town and gave lessons to young people. Nora played melodeon, and her sister Eily played the violin. Nora often spoke about the many get-togethers in their house in Kilworth for music and storytelling. She sometimes talked about living through World War II, when bread, sugar, tea and butter were rationed, and people were given coupons for clothes and cloth. While the rationed food didn't affect the family too much, as theirs was a small one, rationing of cloth brought difficulties for her father, a tailor.

Nora attended primary school at Kilworth and secondary school in Fermoy. While in secondary school, she won a scholarship to Irish College in Ballingearry, West Cork. Upon completion of her education, she secured a job in Dunleas, a large hardware store in Fermoy and remained there for seventeen years as office manager, before moving to Limerick.

As young women in Kilworth, Nora and her sister were members of the local drama society, "The Anglers". She was also an active member of the local ICA, in which she held many positions.

She had a keen interest in sport, and it wasn't unusual for her in her youth to take a bus to Cork or a train to Killarney or Limerick to various GAA matches.

It was while spending a few days visiting Margaret Lombard (her best friend since childhood) in Grange in 1959 that Nora was introduced to a local man, James Hourigan. They courted for a few years and married in July 1962. They reared five children, and both worked very hard to provide for their family. They were happily married for thirty-four years – James passed away on 14th April 1996.

Margaret Lombard's sister, Nora Connors, also married a Limerick man, Tom Barry, and they lived in Limerick City. In fact, Nora Connors had been introduced

to Tom at Nora Hourigan's wedding. It could be said that Margaret Lombard, by relocating to Grange with her husband, Michael, played a substantial role in the marital destinies of the two Noras! They all remained lifelong friends and, when visiting, kept each other up to date on Kilworth news.

After relocating to Grange, Nora was quick to embrace her new parish and took no time getting involved in the local community, developing many new friendships along the way. She had wonderful neighbours along the Old Road.

However, she never lost her true love for her beloved County Cork. This was always evident on Munster GAA championship days when Limerick faced Cork. There was, absolutely, never a doubt about where her allegiance lay.

As well as her great passion for sport, particularly GAA, Nora also had a great enthusiasm for reading, current affairs and doing crosswords. She had a love of writing from a young age. As a teenager, she wrote letters for her grandaunt in



Back row L-R: Joan O'Donoghue, Vera O'Mahony, Mena Higgins, Marie O'Reilly, Eily Hogan, Front row: Nora Hourigan, Gretta Purcell, Nuala Fitzgerald, Sheila Fitzgerald and Bridie O'Riordan.

Fermoy, whose hand dexterity and eyesight had deteriorated due to old age. Those letters were to her grandaunt's daughter in Australia. In Australia, Betty Rogers, in turn, wrote back on behalf of her grandmother. When the two older ladies passed away, Nora and Betty continued to correspond and became lifelong friends. They wrote to each other for over seventy years, sharing each other's life experiences. Betty and her family visited Nora, Jim and family in Grange in 1973 and repeatedly over the years; the families shared many happy times together.

Nora spent many years as Grange Correspondent for the *Vale Star* newspaper; she took over that role from Michael Lombard after he passed away in 1999. She



Nora Hourigan never far from reading material.

enjoyed the challenge immensely and covered many topics. She was well read and knowledgeable on a broad range of subject matters. She kept the local community up to date – she reported local news, including births, deaths, marriages, outcomes of card-playing and other community news. She regularly wrote the ever popular gardening column. Extracts from Nora's *Vale Star* reports appear elsewhere in this book.

She was a member of Grange ICA for over forty years. As in Kilworth in earlier times, she held many positions including secretary and president. Along with her colleagues in Grange ICA Guild, she was instrumental in bringing a public phone box to Grange and public lighting to the Old Road. The ICA held a 'sale-of-work' every year, and Nora always enjoyed this – she could be found looking after the cake stall. She made great friends during her time in the ICA, and in later years when she could no longer drive a car, her loyal friends collected her and took her to meetings and events.

Nora was a lifelong 'Pioneer', a member of the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association (PTAA). She was very proud of that achievement.

She spent the last four years of her life as a resident at Ard na Rí Nursing Home in Holycross. She settled in well and continued to read the newspapers including the *Vale Star* and to do crosswords. She took part in all the daily activities while her health permitted and made many new friends.

Nora will be remembered as an excellent conversationalist who loved chatting to different people about endless topics. She had a great sense of fun and got on well with everyone. She was well liked.

Nora passed away on 17th January 2015, aged eighty-eight. We, her family, are very fortunate and grateful to have had our loving mother for such a long time. The last few years were difficult for her as her health deteriorated. However, we had many happy years with our mother, and we will cherish the memories. Nora is missed dearly by



Nora Hourigan later in life.

her five children: Gerard, Una, Seamus, Vincent and Paul and by her grandchildren, great-grandchildren and her sister Eily.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a hanam.

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L-R: Canon Costello, Helen O'Dwyer, Fr Joe Foley, Pat O'Connell, Gretta Purcell, Joan Kennedy, Sheila Fitzgerald.



Marie and Mike Madden at the annual commemorative service for IRA Volunteers interred in Grange.