

Dr. Mary Agnes Kilfoil

1956-2023

It is with profound sadness that we announce the death of Dr. Mary Agnes Kilfoil, born on August 28, 1956, in Johnville, New Brunswick. Mary passed away peacefully at her home, in Halifax Nova Scotia, on September 7th, 2023. Mary lived life with infinite love, grace, generosity, and selfless devotion to family, friends, and community. She was a woman of remarkable achievements and boundless energy. We will miss her razor-sharp intellect, wit, insightful words of wisdom, and uncanny ability to lighten any room she walked into.



Mary cherished her family and embraced life's simple joys. She found immense happiness in being a mother to Zach, who forever will be her pride and joy. Mary met her soulmate, Dr. Ed Leach in 1999, and they married in August 2005. Together, they built a life that integrated both family and career resulting in a life filled with love and adventure.

Mary's warm heart extended to her large and loving family. She was the eldest of nine siblings – Gerald Kilfoil (Donna), Vincent Kilfoil (Brenda), Patrick Kilfoil (Andrea), Michelle Ralph (Peter), Katherine Wood (Peter), Maria Kilfoil, Michael Kilfoil (Wanda), Sean Kilfoil (Corinne) and a stepsister to Mitchell York. She was a devoted mother to Zach and a caring stepmother to Trilby Sylvain (Garrett), Patrick Leach (Francine), Nathan Leach, and Kevin Leach. Mary was an aunt who loved spending time with her 20 nieces and nephews. Nana Mary cherished being a grandmother to Callia Sylvain, Kaelan Sylvain, Grace Leach, and Cecilia Leach, who have fond memories of baking and sewing with her. She was often at their sporting events cheering them on. Mary loved spending time with family, travel, and vacations, especially at Hubbards Beach. Mary was predeceased by her mother Joan (Brennan) Kilfoil, father, Gerald Kilfoil, and stepmother Anna York Kilfoil.

Mary held graduate degrees from Dalhousie University (Ph.D., Economics) and Carleton University (M.A., Economics) and as well as undergraduate degrees in economics (Saint Mary's University) and business administration (St. FX University). She taught at Acadia University, Mount St. Vincent University, Saint Mary's University and at Dalhousie University in the fields of economics, entrepreneurship, research methods, public policy, program evaluation, and quantitative analysis. Mary also had 20 years of experience in the private sector as an entrepreneur, consultant, academic, researcher and policy analyst in a wide range of local, regional, and national studies.

Mary's crowning achievement was the development and deployment of the Starting Lean course. As the Director of the Norman Newman Centre for Entrepreneurship at Dalhousie University, Mary dedicated her life to fostering innovation and entrepreneurship. Her visionary leadership propelled the Centre to new heights, and she was the driving force behind bringing the Starting Lean course to Dalhousie in 2012. This ground-breaking program, which combined Lean Launchpad methodologies with mentorship, revolutionized entrepreneurial education. In recognition of her exceptional contributions, Mary was honored with the national Entrepreneurship

Educator award from Startup Canada in 2014. Her experience in both the private sector and as a senior economist at Gardner Pinfold Consultants exemplified her commitment to economic analysis and policy.

She and her husband were soulmates dedicated to supporting the success of those they encountered. They were exemplars of vibrant active agers, showing what they could accomplish after age 65. On June 21st of this year Mary won second place in a national pitch competition for her presentation of the Certified Age Friendly Employers program. She was in the advanced stages of completing a pilot with TIANS (the Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia) and was about to scale a proven solution that enhanced economic productivity by addressing a labour shortage in the tourism sector while at the same time demonstrating the positive impact of "purpose" in people's health outcomes.

Her memory will forever live on in the hearts of her family, friends, and colleagues. She leaves behind a legacy of innovation, kindness, and an unwavering dedication to fostering entrepreneurship that will extend for generations to come.

A celebration of Mary's life will take place Saturday September 16th at the Banook Canoe Club, 17 Banook Ave Dartmouth. The celebration service will begin at 2:00 and followed by a chance to network and chat. There is limited parking at the Canoe Club but lots of public parking is available directly across the lake connected by a walking path and bridge.

Funeral service and internment will be held the following Saturday September 23rd at 11:00 at St. John the Evangelist church, 309 Johnville Rd, Johnville, New Brunswick, with reception to follow at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Bath, New Brunswick.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations are made to the Johnville Cemetery fund or the Canadian Cancer Society.

The Celebration will be live cast and then archived on this page. To view the live cast, copy the following link into your internet browser.
<https://www.atlanticlivestream.ca/marykilfoil>