



Mary Katharine Tansey Devens

February 2, 2023

Mary Katharine (Tansey) Devens, 93, passed away quietly on February 2, 2023, in Blacksburg, Virginia. Her storied life recounts vivid images of historic events and military service, and demonstrates an enduring love of country, family, our Lord, and our Blessed Lady.

Born in 1929 at West Point, New York, Mary was the fourth child and only daughter of Major General and Mrs. Patrick H. Tansey, along with four brothers who later served as field-grade military officers. Their close-knit, Army family spent her childhood years at various assignments: Waikiki Beach, Hawaii; Washington, DC; Fort Leavenworth, Kansas; and Camp Jackson, South Carolina. Mary spent her teen years in Washington, DC during WWII - as her father planned wartime logistics while the family worried about three of her Army officer brothers who served in combat units. After the WWII victory in Europe, MG Tansey received orders to join Gen McArthur's Pacific Theater staff, so Mary sailed with family on the first troop ship to Tokyo, Japan – even as enemy submarines still patrolled. Living and attending school in bombed-out Tokyo proved to be distressing, and yet fascinating and inspiring. Stories later surfaced about her family's efforts to feed and support destitute Japanese during post-war recovery. Mary was even donned as "Mary-san" by a classmate – the new Empress of Japan.

In 1947 Tokyo, Mary Tansey met William George "Bud" Devens - a dashing Second Lieutenant and West Point graduate. A lifetime romance of 59 years

began. Their union yielded a grand legacy of 8 children, 19 grandchildren, and 23 great-grandchildren. They served the US Army in Ft Sill, Oklahoma and Ft Leonard Wood, Missouri, then Mary and her three small children stayed in Washington DC during Bud's Korean War combat duty. After the war, their family reunited in Okinawa, Japan for Bud's assignment there. Next came Champagne, Illinois, and then a faculty assignment to West Point, New York. Hardship tours followed, with assignments to Paris, France, and then to a perilous, Soviet-surrounded Berlin in 1962. Mary managed her large family and served the Army community wherever they went. Together, they completed Bud's final military assignment at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, and then retired from the Army in 1966. During her 39 years of military life, Mary crossed the Pacific Ocean six times in troop ships and moved on 26 occasions.

After a brief stay in Norwich, Vermont - Mary and Bud moved their family to Blacksburg, Virginia in 1967. Mary volunteered for her children's activities, and hosted many of Bud's departmental events at Virginia Tech. They attended kids' sporting events & activities, plus countless Hokie games. Mary faithfully served St Mary's Catholic Church as communion minister and an active member of Church Ladies. She volunteered at the Humane Society Thrift Shop, and served in the Trillium Garden Club for 44 years.

All told, Mary Devens was born and raised in the US Army, served as an Army wife, and raised eight children - six of whom served as military officers. She gladly served her country and faced danger. She endured hard living conditions, endless moves, and many tiresome journeys. But it was always with family: her father and mother and brothers - and with Bud and the children. Mary was a loving wife, mother, and friend. She and Bud instilled in their children a great love of God, family, and country. She provided a fine community example wherever they went, and touched so many people in her positive and kind manner. Mary was intelligent, sharp, and full of fun – embracing life with a strong, never-give-up attitude. Standing proud among her ancestors, brothers, husband, and offspring, Mary Devens rightfully

deserves that final and traditional West Point farewell: "Well done. Be thou at peace."

Mary is preceded in death by her husband, LTC William George Devens, her brothers Col Patrick H Tansey Jr., Col Hubert E Tansey, Commander Mike Tansey, and Col Robert Tansey; grandson Derek Devens and great-grandson James Donnally.

Mary is survived by her sisters-in-law: Mrs. Bob Tansey, and Mrs. Mike Tansey; along with many dear nieces, nephews, and friends.

The pride and loves of Mary's life were her husband, Bud, and their eight children, spouses and families: Bill and Donnie Devens, Pat and Patty Devens, Mary Jo and Reaumur Donnally, Bob and Elissa Devens, Diane and John Harvey, Tim and Lynn Devens, Ted and Barbara Devens, Jamie and Karen Devens, 19 grandchildren, and 23 great-grandchildren.

A celebration of Mary's life will be held at St Mary's Catholic Church, Blacksburg, VA, at 11 a.m. Saturday morning, February 11, 2023. Internment and reception will follow. The family will receive friends from 6 to 8 p.m. Friday evening, February 10, 2023, at McCoy Funeral Home, 150 Country Club Drive, Blacksburg.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that you donate to your favorite charity or St. Mary's Church.

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB **10**. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

McCoy Funeral Home
150 Country Club Dr. S.W.
Blacksburg, VA 24060
(540) 552-3211
mccoyfuneralhome@verizon.net
<https://mccoyfuneralhome.com>

Celebration of Life Service

FEB **11**. 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Mary's Catholic Church
1205 Old Mill Rd
#3705
Blacksburg, VA 24060

Tribute Wall

PB


“*Mary and Bud were dear friends of ours when we lived just up the street from them in Blacksburg and attended church at St. Mary's. We felt like family and always loved being with them and hearing about what their children were doing. I remember having a wedding shower for Diane and Joan Lechowich and I wanted to see all the pretty gifts before they were opened! They will be remembered in my prayers with much love from Pat Bellas*

Patricia (Patty) Bellas - January 25, 2025 at 04:02 PM

CL

“*I've been sending Mary a Christmas card for many years ever since my parents Bob and Kay McCartney left Blacksburg in 1995. They passed years ago. Mary and Bud were dear friend of theirs. I just came across her obituary via the internet. My sincerest condolences. She was a wonderful lady and a great friend to many. Cathy McCartney Llaneza*

Cathy Llaneza - December 11, 2023 at 10:41 PM


Stannye
Tansey

“*A most amazing special sister-in-law....I was married to Mike Tansey her youngest brother. She was amazing her whole life such a role model in every aspect of her life which was most full of experiences.....may God hold Mary deeply in His heart.....Amen.....*

Stannye Tansey - February 09, 2023 at 02:10 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Mary Katharine Tansey Devens.*



February 08, 2023 at 04:30 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Mary Katharine Tansey Devens.*



February 05, 2023 at 08:42 PM



“ *Thank you for all the love through the years, Aunt Mary!!! Enjoy your celebration in heaven with all those we love! We'll miss you so.*

Tim Tansey - February 05, 2023 at 04:51 PM



“ *What a wonderful woman my Aunt Mary was! Boy did she break the mold! Incredibly warm, loving, and fun! She always had a twinkle and a gleam in those beautiful blue eyes! My dad (her brother Bob) just adored her! What a wonderful reunion she is going to have in heaven with her mom, dad, Uncle Bud, and her 4 brothers!*

Polly Burgoon - February 05, 2023 at 03:19 PM

KH

Polly...Great to hear these kind words!!! They will have a Great Reunion!!!❤️🙏😊

Kathleen Rimmele...friend of Jody Hammon - February 06, 2023 at 11:28 AM

 Stannye Tansey

A wonderful sister-in-law who was truly loved and respected by all who knew her.....a most amazing and wonderful woman...

Stannye Tansey - February 09, 2023 at 02:11 PM

RD

“ *There are not enough words to define how grateful I am when I think of my mother (in-law), Mary Tansey Devens. I met her in 1972 when I started dating Mary Jo - 51 wonderful years filled with amazing instances of her kindness and love. Her life skills allowed her to accomplish so much ... from being a fantastic wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother to being a generous giver in all her communities to exhibiting her devotion to God. She was a party girl - dancing on tables during the OctoberFest - always the belle of the ball. We will miss her energy here with us on Earth but know she is watching over us from above. She will continue to be part of us forever.*

Reaumur Donnally - February 05, 2023 at 01:32 PM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Mary Katharine Tansey Devens.*



February 05, 2023 at 12:15 AM

PQ

“ We loved and will truly miss sweet Mary. Her smile, bright blue sparkling eyes and wonderful upbeat personality always made others feel happy to be in her presence. It's comforting to know heaven holds the faithful departed. God hold you close, dear Mary.



Phyllis & Mike Quinn - February 04, 2023 at 06:22 PM

DA

“ Mary Devens was a true lady who loved everyone and who everyone loved. From the first time I met her in 1979 when I went to work for her husband, Bud, I felt like I had known her all my life and she made me feel special. Mary was always doing something for others and enjoyed doing so. I feel very honored to have known her and Bud and for them to have been a big part of my life. To the family, I love each of you very much. My prayers for all of you. May God Bless each of you

Debbie Atkins
Engineering Fundamentals ❤️

Debbie Atkins - February 04, 2023 at 12:55 PM

PD

“ Mary Devens, Mom to me, was the best mother-in-law a girl could have! She always, to her last days, greeted me with a smile and made me feel special. She considered the spouses to be her children. You will be missed, Mom, by Pat, me, and all of the Pat Devens family.

Patty Devens - February 04, 2023 at 10:59 AM