



Mary Frances Kelly-Poh

September 4, 1943 - April 6, 2026

"Mary Frances Kelly-Poh passed away at John Muir Hospital on April 6, 2026, surrounded by family, after an illness.

Mary Frances was born September 4, 1943, in Macon, Georgia, to Francis Leo, of Sag Harbor, New York, and Mary Weems Kelly (Owens) of Baltimore, Maryland. She preceded her identical twin, Harriette Anne, by 15 minutes. The twins were six weeks premature and quite small; their mother was urged to leave the twins at the hospital and go home, but with home 15 miles away, not knowing how to drive, and her husband overseas, Mrs. Kelly refused. The twins would stay in the hospital for some weeks, not leaving until they weighed at least 5 lbs.

In Macon, the Kellys lived on a 15-acre farm, raising vegetables and chickens. Mr Kelly's work with the US government led the family to move multiple times. After Macon, the family would move to Marietta, Georgia, then Brunswick, Maine, on to Madison, Wisconsin, where the twins would graduate from West High School. Eventually settled in Chico, California, where both Mary Frances and Harriette Anne attended Chico State University, studying Nursing. Mary Frances graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Chico State

University in 1968 and was soon hired by Vallejo General Hospital to work in post-operative recovery. It was there that she met her future husband, the anesthesiologist Dr Hoe T. Poh, whom she married in 1990.

The couple moved to Benicia in 1972 and left only for their extensive travel, visiting many places in Asia, Oceania, South America, North America and Europe. Their final home together was a house with expansive views of the Carquinez Strait and room for Mary Frances to indulge in her passion for native plant gardening.

Mary Frances obtained a credential in Non-Profit Management from California State University, Hayward, which she put to use in her extensive volunteer work with the California Native Plant Society, Embroiderers Guild of America, Benicia-Tula Sister Cities Association, First Street Art Gallery, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Order of the Eastern Star, Benicia Historical Museum, and Asian Art Museum. A life-long progressive, Mary Frances campaigned for women's rights, reproductive freedoms and equality for all. She was active in Democratic politics in Benicia and Solano County, including running for office. She loved painting, gardening, chorale, and travel.

Mary Frances is survived by Harriette Anne Carr, daughters Cynthia Roberson (Kevin) and Kim Imamoto (Brian), grandson Brandon Roberson, nieces and nephews, grand-nieces and grand-nephews . She was predeceased by her husband and parents.

Services will be held Saturday, April 25th at 2:00PM at St Paul's Episcopal Church, 120 East J St., Benicia. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to the California Native Plant Society and the Benicia-Tula Sister Cities Association."

Previous Events

Service

APR **25**. 2:00 PM.

St Paul'S Episcopal Church

Tribute Wall

MF

“*Mary Frances was one of the first people to welcome me to the Embroidery Guild of America when I retired in 2018. I served as Treasurer of Pacific Chapter while Mary Frances was President. She was a true friend and a valued one. I will miss her presence at EGA events. I will be making a donation to EGA in her memory.*

Mary Farias - April 21 at 03:07 PM