



## Jeanne L. (Gensert) Conway

April 8, 1925 - August 18, 2017

Jeanne L. (Gensert) Conway age 92 of Westlake formerly of Mentor, died Friday, August 18, 2017, surrounded by her family. She is the love of Neil J. Conway II's life and the mother of nine, grandmother of twenty, and great-grandmother of ten. She was an astounding and accomplished artist.

Jeanne was born April 8, 1925 to Lewis Gensert and Coletta Waldeisen Gensert. Her ancestors include The Merrifield Family, who came to America in 1635 on a ship named "The Deliverance." They made their voyage to America a mere fifteen years after "The Mayflower."

Jeanne had an older brother named Richard. The family of four originally lived on the Westside of Cleveland, on Nicholas Ave. Jeanne's earliest impressions were full of colorful characters. She observed many of Cleveland's first generation immigrants, tipping her head to look over the counters of Westside Market vendors like the horseradish couple, who faithfully shred their horseradish each day, tears flowing down their faces. Jeanne's flamboyant Aunt Flori was an endearing early influence, with her penchant for extravagance, exemplified by her tastes in clothing, jewelry, and social life. Aunt Flori's flair is still evident in Jeanne's classic and unique personal style.

When Jeanne was eleven, Jeanne's family moved to Ansel Road on the East side of Cleveland. She attended Notre Dame Elementary, where her artistic talent began to blossom, and landed her in trouble. The lifelike cartoons of the Notre Dame Nuns, beautifully drawn on the inside of her desk, got the Sisters' undivided attention. The nun's did not approve of young Jeanne's artistic license to create habit wearing mice that bore their image. Art teacher, Sister Mary Agatha, recognized the artist in Jeanne and became her official mentor and personal Art Instructor in sixth grade. Sister Agatha continued her tutelage throughout the rest of Jeanne's grade school and High School years.

In High School, Jeanne made the Varsity Basketball team while still a freshman. She was also voted onto the Homecoming court. Inevitably, Jeanne's natural talent was

acknowledged while she attended Notre Dame Academy. She was awarded the Golden Key Award for her art work during her sophomore year. After graduating from Notre Dame Academy in 1943, Jeanne attended The Cleveland Institute of Art, majoring in Sculpture with a minor in Painting. She achieved the prestigious Gund Scholarship, earning a fifth year scholarship to The Institute. She would eventually graduate second in her 1948 class.

Although very serious about her studies, Jeanne found time for a social life that included laughter filled rides in convertibles and themed costume parties. She also traveled to The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, where she encountered a chance meeting with Salvadore Dali. "It was so strange," says Jeanne. "At first, he seemed to be trying to follow me incognito. I couldn't help noticing him with his cape and his handlebar mustache. He wanted to see what I thought of his paintings!"

In her college years she also began dating her future husband, Neil Conway. Neil was a determined young Army Air Corps Veteran and law student. Jeanne's beloved Uncle George threw her a lovely wedding on September 18, 1948. He also bought her a satin wedding dress with 2,000 cultured pearls

Nine pregnancies will change an artist's perspective and venue. Baptisms and First Communion were thrown with her signature flourish. The buffet table was a masterpiece at each holiday celebration. She sadly lost her first child, Mary, at birth. If you asked her children, they would rattle off their names in quick order of descending ages: Neil, Chris, Jeanne, Keith, Marc, Rachel, Sean, and Barry. Jeanne's home in Cleveland Heights was full of children. There was constant motion on all four floors of 3020 Berkshire Road. The activity spilled outside occasionally, like when son Keith "borrowed" the milk truck.

Jeanne's adult days cannot be recollected properly without taking note of her giving beyond the boundaries of her small size. She often maneuvered her son Marc's wheelchair to the grocery store or the beach and carrying this growing prankster whenever needed. The unexpected loss of Marc left a wound that could never be healed.

The family moved to larger quarters at 9397 Canterbury Lane in 1968. Jeanne's artistic eye now focused on selecting every detail for their new home. As the kids grew and became more independent, Jeanne found a little more time to devote to her own art. Oil on canvas seemed to be a better choice. Clay structures, intended to be cast, would often mysteriously be transformed into small armies of clay stick men overnight. "I was working on a milkmaid sculpture," she says, "About the fourth time I remade her, and little hands turned her into little soldiers, I knew it was time to give it up." So Jeanne changed her

medium, and proceeded to create dozens of portraits of and landscapes that are now her priceless legacy.

Jeanne also used her art to make other people happy. . She happily gave away many of her amazing works as gifts. She produced portraits of loved ones for neighbors, friends and acquaintances, not overlooking the mail carrier. She also painted landscapes of favorite places for others.

Jeanne does not think of herself as particularly active socially; but her lovely demeanor, style, and classy ways invite and attract many friends and admirers. Jeanne personifies charm with her smile, laughter, and the twinkle of her eyes. When Jeanne accompanied her husband Neil to ancestral country, Ireland, she laughingly recalls how she knew that she had won them over when they repeatedly asked her, "Are you sure you're not just a little bit Irish?" To this she quietly reminded them, "Not a bit!"

Survivors include her children: Neil (Maureen) Conway, Christine (Carl) Emerick, Jeanne (Donald) Wagner, Keith (Peggy) Conway, Rachel (Sean) Meaney, Sean Conway and Barry (Kim) Conway. She is deeply loved and remembered by her grandchildren, Seanna, Neil, Liam and Declan Conway, Jennifer, Jason and Bridget Emerick, Donna, Adam, Allen and Justin Wagner, Orla and Delaney Conway, Alison, Claire, Devon and Sean Meaney, and Aedan, Fiona and Liam Conway; and her great-grandchildren include Nolan, Conor and Alana Patton, Gabrielle, Alexis and Amelia Wagner, Xander, Elet & Odysseus Wagner.

She was preceded in death by her husband: Neil J, Conway II, daughter, Mary Conway; son, Marc Conway, parents: Louis and Coletta Gensert and brother: Richard Gensert.

Private family arrangements were entrusted to Brunner Sanden Deitrick Funeral Home & Cremation Center, 8466 Mentor Ave., Mentor. Interment was in All Souls Cemetery, Chardon Township.

Family request contributions may be made to The Poor Clares, 3501 Rocky River Dr., Cleveland, OH 44111 or St. Mary of the Assumption Catholic Church, 8560 Mentor Ave., Mentor, OH 44060. The Family would like to thank the staff of Rae Ann Nursing Home for their loving care.

Offer condolences at [www.brunners.com](http://www.brunners.com).

# Comments

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“ My deepest condolences to the Conway family. Jeanne was a lovely and talented woman who left you with wonderful memories and a legacy that will live on in your hearts. Peter Strozniak.



**Peter Strozniak** - September 05, 2017 at 10:38 AM

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“ 4 files added to the album Family Fun



**Jeanne** - August 24, 2017 at 07:28 AM

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“ 1 file added to the album The family



**Jeanne** - August 24, 2017 at 07:12 AM

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“ 8 files added to the album New Album Name



**Jeanne** - August 24, 2017 at 06:07 AM



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“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



**Sean Conway** - August 23, 2017 at 10:50 PM

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“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



**Jeanne** - August 23, 2017 at 10:46 PM



“ Perfect. You two are stunning

**Keith Conway** - March 28 at 10:02 PM

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“ “She made broken look beautiful  
and strong look invincible.  
She walked with the Universe  
on her shoulders and made it  
look like a pair of wings.”

You will always be remembered for your inspired creativity, tremendous artistic talent, and the unconditional love and giving of yourself to each of us and our specific needs. But you will mostly be remembered for the fierce strength exhibited throughout your life.

Love you always Grandma. <3

Love,  
Donna Jeanne, Michael, Nolan, Conor, and Alana Jeanne

**Donna Patton** - August 23, 2017 at 01:37 PM

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“ Deepest sympathy to everyone in the Conway family from the Moir clan. Many of our earliest memories center on our moms out in the backyard chatting - our mom undoubtedly with a cup or coffee and a cigarette - while any number of us played. Your mom was a great woman, an incredible mother and a wonderful friend. We'd like to believe that she and Gussie Moir are up in heaven right now catching up! Best wishes to you all - we're grateful for the time she was in our lives!

Terry Moir speaking for Sheila, Judith, Ellen, Chris and Tom Moir

**Terry Moir** - August 23, 2017 at 11:11 AM



“ Thank You

**Jeanne** - August 24, 2017 at 06:14 AM