



Mary Catherine Dunleavy

January 19, 1942 - September 5, 2026

St. Louis, Missouri

Mary Catherine Dunleavy died in St. Louis on September 5, 2026. She was eighty-four. Born there on January 19, 1942, she grew up in a house where the church bulletin was treated as a legal document and a pot of soup was treated as a ministry. She learned a typewriter before she learned a highway. A correct spelling, she said, is a form of respect.

She spent thirty-four years as the secretary of a brick parish on a street that changed names more than once. She typed the sick list, the birth list, and the quiet list of people who needed a ride and would not ask. She did not put her name on a committee. She put other people's names in the right order. When a pastor left in a hurry she kept the keys and the coffee and the calendar until the next one learned which door stuck.

She married Howard Dunleavy in 1963. He sold insurance and died in 2000. They raised a son and a daughter who still argue about who got the last piece of caramel cake. Mary kept the garden of hostas, and the habit of leaving a casserole on a porch without a speech. She sat through long meetings the way other people sit through weather.

Grandchildren remember a woman who corrected their thank-you notes more than their homework, who kept a biscuit tin of paper clips, and who could name every auntie in the sanctuary by the hat she no longer wore. She died in St. Louis, in the heat she had always said you could live with if you dressed for it. The bulletin is someone else's now. The patience she practiced there is harder to replace than a typewriter.

Services

A funeral Mass in St. Louis with one familiar hymn, sung slowly. A gift to the parish benevolence fund is

welcome.

NN-OBIT-2026-C086

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