

EULOGY FOR PAT HUGHES (By her daughter, Carolyn) 2026

Mum was born Frances Patricia Lewis in Birkenhead on 29th November, 1929 and has been known as Pat.

She was named after her grandmother who she never met and died during the 1918 flu epidemic when her dad, Richard (Dick) Lewis was in his late teens.

Dick Lewis moved his young family to Flint Mountain from Liverpool when he got a job as a master welder at Courtaulds in Greenfield in 1936 during the depression.

Mum came very close to an early death from pneumonia at the age of 6 before penicillin, and had a resulting heart murmur. Family held vigil and praying all night because at that time a young child either died or didn't,

But it has always been clear to all the family, that Mum was not going anywhere until she was good and ready!

Family members have told us that Mum was not an easy child! Her own Mum, Nana, called her "born awkward". Stubborn, serious and very clever but followed the rules.

Molly was only 18 months younger. Happy, cracking jokes, getting into mischief. Mum getting Molly down off the roof after crawling up a drainpipe. Molly dragging Mum to the pictures where Mum crawled under the seat. They were not just sisters. They were the very best of friends.

Ann was born a few years younger, and a brother Richard, was born when Mum was in teacher's training college in Bangor.

Dick and Mary Lewis were advised to try to send Mum to Grammar School after she tied for first place in the county following her 11 plus exam, and that it would be a terrible waste of such a sharp intellect to not educate such a clever daughter. Dick Lewis took extra shifts to get her through grammar school and then teacher's training college in Bangor.

During this time, Mum remembered going to school during the depression with children having newspaper tied around their feet with string and newspaper tied around their bodies against the cold. But she and her family had a coat and shoes.

She never forgot that.

In Bangor, she was the only Catholic girl. The only poor girl..

Following her training and rationing was still in place and everything was still short.....Mum was earning her own money and keen to have some fun, buy clothes and go dancing in the years after the deprivations of the depression and WW2.

She wanted to teach Biology to Grammar School children but instead was placed with infants in a Catholic School in Shotton.

She felt very bitter about that decision being made because she was a Catholic. This was followed by a boyfriend finishing with her because his family did not approve of her being Catholic.

Her friends dragged her out to a dance in Chester, and that's where she met Bill Hughes from Shotton. "One Enchanted Evening" from the musical South Pacific became "their song" because he saw her across a crowded room in a lovely red dress and made a beeline across the floor to ask her for a dance. Mum & Dad had recently seen the musical, and that's what they talked about. They both shared a love of music and dancing.

But she was Catholic and he was Protestant.

Dad found out where she worked and Mum was shocked to get showered with flowers, chocolates and nylons.

After just a few months, dad asked grandad, for her hand in marriage and grandad suggested maybe you should ask Pat first?

Grandad knew his daughter and she was adamant she was not getting married until she was 25 and made dad wait a couple of years.

Dad was 13 years older and had served in the army during the entire World War 2. When he met Mum, he was training to become a physical education teacher and was planning to settle down and start a family.

That's what happened in 1955 when they got married in the Catholic Church in Flint. BOTH faiths attended!

They bought a house at 31 Taliesin Ave in Shotton where they lived for the rest of their married life.

I was born in 1956 and Bill (the younger) followed in 1962. Dad was hoping for a boy. Another Bill Hughes.

Instead it was a girl. Me. Mum wanted to name me Anne Marie. That would have been a great name for me. But it was too Catholic. For some reason, I was named Carolyn. But dad did not like that name either. He did not like the name Carol. So, for a quarter century I had to live with a name that I hated. Lyn Hughes. When I was 25 however, my Mum was virtually the only person to respect my decision. She ALWAYS called me Carolyn. That says a lot about my Mum. Now my niece is called Anna Marie!

Both Mum & Dad being very clever, & opinionated, it was difficult to get through the day without them arguing the toss about something or other. But they cared about each other. Dad had a tremendous sense of humor and good spirits. He could (well mostly) joke Mum out of a bad mood. jShe had a lot of bad moods.

They both loved family and enjoyed getting everyone together - even if they voted for different political parties, worshipped in different churches, and Heaven forbid, supported different football clubs (Liverpool Vs Everton)!!!!

Mum & Dad also both loved going to dances and socializing with friends and family who piled into 31 Taliesin on holidays and for parties.

Dad discovered that using his chemistry talents to make beer and wine was tremendous fun as a hobby. So Mum had vats of beer and wine hissing and releasing gas all over the top of the kitchen cupboards. The beer had to be toned down after his best mate, Ron Cooper and even the Chapel Minister had to be carried off home.

There were also a great many dinner dances at the Steelworks, Hawarden Golf Club (where Dad was a member for his whole adult life) and the Masons where he was a Master Mason. They were seldom home at the weekend unless they were entertaining.

When I was 18 months old, the headmaster of the Richard Gwynn in Flint asked Mum if she would like to come back to work. Mum was NOT a happy housewife. She was bored to tears and ran for the exit.

She worked at the Richard Gwynn in Flint for the rest of her career eventually becoming Head of Year. She was considered a very competent and respected teacher by both children and staff.

Mum & Dad were not friendly teachers at first. Start out harsh and then get softer.

Mum never got rid of her pointed teacher finger as most of us know!. Meanwhile, Dad was working as a teacher at Elfed High School in Buckley. Had after school games and activities and was very seldom home.

But, Mum went to the hairdressers after school every Friday before they went out dancing or meeting friends. Dad was then in charge to make the tea which was something on toast and the cardinal sin of a milk bottle on the table, much to everyone's delight!

Working full time became much harder when 3 of the grandparents passed away in 1964, 1966 and 1971, They had been caregivers, washed clothes, the house, made dinners and given emotional support to both Bill and Pat and me and Bill.

The most difficult loss for Mum was losing her Mum, and she became very ill with pneumonia again. Working full time as a woman was very hard in those days. Pat had to rely on me a lot more to clean, shop and help her in a variety of ways.

But Mum preferred to have the kitchen to herself to make a meal. She was a good cook, and everyone got shooed out of the kitchen or there would be an argument.

Both parents working afforded a lot of alterations on the house - mostly to make the house warmer (double glazing on windows and taking out the chimney breasts and installing central heating) as dad didn't like being cold and mum didn't like cleaning out the fireplace. It also opened up both rooms, which was better for entertaining.

We also both loved traveling abroad and the extra income helped with that.

The family left on holiday every summer with the a caravan a day or two after school broke up, for the entire summer holiday, meeting up with Uncle Len, Aunty Kay, and cousins for most of that time in Italy or Spain, sightseeing on the way there and back. Everyone in both families agrees that those trips were the most precious and most fun memories of the late 1960's and early 1970's. Beautiful beaches, and sightseeing at a time when places were less crowded than they are today.

Meanwhile,, I took the family love of travel to America in 1975.

I made my life in the United States, much to mum & dad's heartbreak —at first. And I married a man who is a Jew. Gary Fenchel who lost most family during WW2). Bill had trouble with it at first. Mum shrugged it off. It turned out that her best friend in college at Bangor fell in love with a black man from Jamaica. He was a good man. Spiritual. Kind. Educated. They had to flee to Jamaica once married due to prejudice. And that experience changed her forever.

Mum & Dad quickly loved traveling to America, and made that a destination more and more over the years. I was a speech therapist for over 30 years, including supervising and teaching graduate students. I settled down with my husband Gary, a software engineer over 40 years ago and had 2 children, Gillian & Ryan. I have lived in the Chicago area for many years, then Southern California and now we live in New Mexico.

Brother Bill also moved to America 10 years after me, and has forged a successful career in high tech. He has lived in Texas and San Jose, California and has been married over 20 years and had 2 daughters, Anna and Abbey and a son, Andrew.

They loved the trips to America to visit our family and their grandchildren for many. many years; spending several months on 2-3 trips a year for holidays, births, and being part of raising the children and eventually attending graduations.

In addition during this time they also went on holidays in Europe with beloved friends, to Corfu. the Holy Land, Belgium, France, Italy and Spain

Mum got very bored after she retired however.

First she worked in the local Citizen's Advice Bureau in Shotton. She found knitting relaxing and was very good at it. She became an obsessive knitter after giving up smoking and it helped her to stop chewing her nails. Dad said she would end up chewing her elbows!

Mum was always an avid reader too. Dad often complained that he couldn't talk to her when her nose was in a book. She particularly enjoyed mysteries and political thrillers- anything political in fact and also discussing politics. Poor Barry Jones (the local M.P.) knew Pat Hughes both in her legendary letters of complaint and in person too.

Mum eventually found her feet with the Union of Catholic Mothers. At first it was a local activity. She threw herself into the whole organization. There were parties, pilgrimages and a wonderful social life as well as religious services. This became even more important after she lost her beloved sister, our Aunty Molly to cancer in the late 90's.

Mum became the President of the UCM in North Wales, and then the whole of Wales and then was voted onto the National Board. This involved a lot of speeches, which required overcoming her fear of public speaking.

Dad understood her need to be involved and would be waiting in the car every time she got off the train from London or wherever she went. To be honest, this gave Mum a wonderful excuse to buy beautiful clothes -which she did with great relish!

And mixing with the Catholic clergy of course. Her kitchen became a small office and Dad, the office secretary, answered phone calls. Any phone call and he would announce, "She's off with the Mothers!"

One Saturday afternoon, Dad told a Bishop who rang, that the office was closed, and he was in the middle of the football scores. So could he please ring back tomorrow?

Eventually Dad's health began to deteriorate and Mum turned down the opportunity to become the President of the National Board which would have required a lot of traveling including to the United Nations. Dad later insisted that he would have managed. But sadly, he passed away suddenly in August 2008.

Mum did not recover. She had a small stroke on the plane 2 weeks after Bill's funeral next to me. I was told at the hospital that it might not have been the first time and would not be the last.

For the next 3 years Mum continued to live her life as best she could, visiting America and doing alterations and improvements on 31Tal. She went on a trip to see her granddaughter Gillian at her college in New Hampshire with me and Gillian's graduation and joined them on a road trip across the country with sightseeing at Niagara Falls. Mum & I went on trips to Turkey, Prague and Poland and planned on many more.

But Mum's health kept failing with continuing small strokes. She experienced a rapid loss of her legendary memory on top of depression. She had lost her husband of many years, and then lost a couple of good friends. She had been unsteady on her feet since she began to experience strokes and needed a chair lift to get up and down the stairs. And now she began to fall regularly. Good neighbours had to peel her off the floor

In 2014, Bill & I had to move Mum into residential care and Bill, Gillian & I had to empty and sell the family home on Taliesin Ave the following year.

Between 2014 and the Pandemic, I went to Britain between 2-4 times a year and Bill also visited with his family once a year.

After 4 years we were forced to move Mum to a more appropriate facility as her dementia accelerated.

Miraculously, Pat's assigned social worker had been my old friend, Fleur, who was a social worker and managed to find a spot at the Haulfryn care home in Cymau, where Mum has resided for the rest of her life.

We would like to thank you all for coming today. Mum's friends and family have pre-deceased her except her cousin Celia, and our cousins and friends

Thank you to everyone who visited Mum at Warrendale and at Haulfryn. Thank you to my friends. And Bill and family. Without them, the past 12 years would have been a nightmare. You have picked me up and dropped me off at the airport in Manchester, given me a place to stay or offered. You gave them some great nights out or lunches with chin wags, and a lot of much needed laughs.

I would like to particularly thank Lynda Evens for hosting me so many times over the years and Kathy Jones who was instrumental in helping me after an injury and operation a few days before Mum passed away on February 1st. So many details and arrangements got worked out because of Kathy Jones.

Haulfryn has been fantastic. Words are simply inadequate to describe how wonderful the care is there and how they have adjusted to Mum and her needs.

Clare Roberts and Abbie Edwards are amazing managers and everyone who works there is well trained, helpful, cheerful and supportive. They never once complained about setting up a FaceTime with me and mum, especially during the pandemic Mum has been content, felt safe and Haulfryn was her home.

Haulfryn is our choice for any donations in lieu of flowers to continue their work with ladies and gents with dementia.

We are all grateful for Bill & Pat's long lives.

To grandparents, aunts and uncles and cousins and family friends (most having passed away).

But the legacy of courage and resilience in the face of adversity, the importance of education either at Uni or a trade, the tolerance towards others, even someone who married your son or daughter across class, and religion

For the appreciation of love and loyalty to family and friends and enjoying humor and appreciating it with friends and relatives. The exploring and traveling and enjoying a full life. And especially of faith and love.

We shall be having a get-together for close friends and relatives by invitation only. You will have received one

Please sign the book at the door before you leave here or at the celebration of life afterward