

Theresa Lenkner
April 3, 1937 – June 21, 2023

Theresa Lenkner (née Welby) was born in Somerville, MA on April 3, 1937, and passed away on June 21, 2023, in Grossmont Hospital, La Mesa, CA at age 86. She was the mother of six children, seven grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

Terry was the third of four daughters to Michael Welby and Margaret (Conneally) Welby, both Irish-Catholic immigrants from Connemara, County Galway. Michael and Margaret immigrated to Boston in the 1920s separately before meeting and marrying in their new country.

Theresa (Terry) and her sisters Mary, Margaret (Peggy), and Dorothy (Dotty), whom all preceded her in death, were raised in Somerville, a suburb of Boston, and lived on Temple Street and later on Wigglesworth Street. Terry was unique in her family of six being the only redhead—a hair color found in only 1–2% of the world’s population. With her red hair and numerous freckles, relatives would say Terry had the “map of Ireland on her face.”

After graduating from Somerville High School in 1955, Terry worked clerical office jobs in Boston. While working at Boston Mutual Life Insurance Company, she met and began dating Frederick (Fred) Medugno, a first-generation Italian-American from Malden, MA. Fred was a co-op employee and student-athlete (football) at Northeastern University in Boston.



In April 1957, Terry and Fred were married in St. Polycarp Catholic Church in Somerville, and honeymooned in Miami, Florida. Their first son Frederick Joseph (Joe) was born in January 1958 in Brookline, MA. The family relocated to Philadelphia and then Fort Benning, GA as Fred served in the U.S. Army for two years. In May 1959, their second son Richard Anthony was born. After Fred left the service and the family moved back to Boston, their first daughter, Marisa Ann was born in June 1960.

In 1961, the family of five relocated to San Diego, California, where Fred’s brother Vincent Medugno was stationed while serving in the U.S. Navy. Fred landed a job at General Dynamics while Terry continued to be a stay-at-home mom and three more children arrived to complete the family. Michele Anne was born in February 1962. Kevin Michael was born in April 1964. Tina Marie was born in October 1965.

Terry and Fred bought their first home in the Lake Murray area of San Diego. A few years later, Terry and Fred divorced, and over the next 15 years, she moved around San Diego County with her children to the towns of Clairemont, Poway, Escondido, Carlsbad, and Oceanside. During

this time, Terry married and divorced a second husband, and then married her third husband, Howard Paul Lenkner. Terry and Paul met at an A.A. Meeting and were together for almost 50 years. She would have celebrated her 50th year of sobriety on August 26, 2023.

When her kids were older and mostly out on their own, Terry continued her peripatetic ways, traveling from Oceanside, CA, where she and Paul lived on a sailboat in the harbor to an Idyllwild cabin in the San Jacinto Mountains to a house in Gresham, OR to an RV trailer park in Quartzsite, AZ and later a permanent home, then finally to a senior living complex for the last 10 years of her life in El Cajon, CA.



In addition to living in multi-places, Terry and Paul crisscrossed the country, visiting many states in their RV, and making trips to Canada and Mexico. One of the highlights of her travels, was when she visited the “old country” with her sister Mary and saw the towns in Connemara where their parents were from.

In addition to traveling, Terry and Paul were serial small business creators. At different times, they had an office cleaning business, a wallpapering business, a baked goods store, a thrift store, a used furniture store, and an assortment of other enterprises.

As a parent, Terry was an advocate for her son Joe who was developmentally disabled from birth. When he was younger, she made sure he participated in Special Olympics, which he loved. She and Joe shared a love of dogs. Over the course of her life, Terry and the family had a menagerie of strays, mutts, and purebreds.

Terry was a supporter of son Richard’s writing career, both in journalism and playwriting. She attended all the shows he acted in when he was a teenager and many of the plays he wrote in his ensuing years in college and afterward. Whenever his writings go too dark for her tastes, she encouraged him to focus on lightening things up using his humor, which, of course, is very Irish.

Terry was a master gardener. She and her daughter Marisa shared a passion for plants. They loved going to the nursery, spending time together at craft fairs, and making and selling crafts. Terry also enjoyed her son-in-law Dave Schroeder’s guitar playing and sense of humor.

Terry and daughter Michele loved spending time together. Michele felt that she could share just about anything with her mother. They had a great friendship and enjoyed long talks and laughed a lot. Also, Terry was very fond of her jovial son-in-law Bill Corkery.

Terry was close to her son Kevin and was proud of his athletic achievements (cross-country running) and artistic pursuits. She was heartbroken when he took his own life while at college in

Iowa in May 1985 at the age of 21. Yet, she refused to give up her sobriety and seek comfort in the bottle during one of the worst times of her life.

Terry and daughter Tina shared the “curse” of being left-handed and a love for interior design and going to open houses. Near the end of Terry’s life, Tina was a reliable and welcomed caregiver of her mother when she needed help with her personal care.

As a grandparent, Nana Terry was active in her grandchildren’s lives when she and her husband Paul were living nearby. In San Diego, she frequently looked after her first grandson, Tina’s son Beau Smith, and supported his participation in sports. She was a very happy great-grandmother to Beau’s daughter Amani.

In Oregon, she was a frequent babysitter of her second grandson Daniel Schroeder, and loved his friendly sweet personality and admired his devotion to school, swimming, and soccer. Terry mourned deeply with Marisa, Dave, and sister Nicole when Daniel died in a backyard pool accident in 2000 at the age of 12.

On her visits to Toronto, Canada and Fremont, CA, she liked chatting with her third grandson Terence Medugno and loved his artwork. Also, on her visits to Toronto and Fremont, Nana Terry tried hard to learn American Sign Language and use it with her second granddaughter Miranda (Medugno) Kuehne. Nana mastered the “I Love You” sign and used that sign even in her last days while in the hospital. She was a sweet great-granny to Miranda’s two children Ezekiel and Eliza.

With third granddaughter Nicole (Schroeder) Davis, Nana Terry shared a love for shoes and doing crafts. She appreciated Nicole’s talent for fashion design and styling. Nana Terry was also a loving great-grandmom to Nicole’s son James.

Nana Terry loved first granddaughter (Michele’s daughter) Emily Corkery’s singing voice and her photography. With her fourth grandson (Michele’s son), William Corkery, Nana Terry was a fan of his acting career and enjoyed attending many of his performances.

As the last surviving member of her family of origin, Theresa carried the title of “matriarch” lightly. She was greatly appreciated for her warmth, down-to-earth attitude, sense of humor, and generous spirit by her many nieces and nephews as well as her close friends, fellow A.A. members, neighbors, and acquaintances.



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