



## Agnes Sheila Connolly

August 16, 1942 - March 5, 2026

Agnes Sheila Connolly passed away on Thursday March 5, 2026 at 6:51 AM in Windsor, California. She was 83 years old.

Parkinson's had crept into her mind and body over the last decade, causing Agnes to retreat slowly and in ways not always apparent to her loved ones. She suffered a stroke in late July of 2025, which further diminished her interaction with the world. She spent her last months in a quiet and peaceful way, being tended to by her loving husband and kind caregivers.

Agnes Sheila O'Reilly was born in Dublin, Ireland on August 16, 1942. She was the youngest of 5 children. Her parents were Michael and Maud O'Reilly, both from County Sligo. The townland where they raised their family was called Cornelstown, just outside of Dunboyne in County Meath. It was a hundred acre cattle farm about 10 miles from Dublin. Agnes had 3 sisters, Mabel, Helen, and Ita, and one brother Cathal. Her father was a teacher in the local Dunboyne school and her mother was both a registered and homeopathic nurse, practicing locally in the 1930-40's. Maternal grandparents also lived at Cornelstown, managing the property and cattle operations.

During hard times in the first decade of the 20th century, Mary Kelly had left Cornelstown and brought her only child Maud to New York where she worked for good wages as a seamstress in a dramatic production company. Maud

attended school in NYC for about 7 years. The pair returned to Ireland in 1909 when Maud was 11 years old. They both adored America and talked about it often.

Agnes spent her time on the farm as a child reading extensively and caring for many generations of barn cats. She would ride her bike all over the place, to play tennis matches and to take the famous Balingar bus into Dublin. Agnes attended University College Dublin where she met Patrick Connolly. He was an international student from South Africa, from an Irish family. They married upon graduation and moved to London where Agnes joined J. Walter Thompson advertising agency. Business transfers soon took them to Belgium then Tokyo. There Agnes worked as assistant to the Asia editor for Readers Digest. This was at the height of the Vietnam War. Agnes volunteered in her spare time at the USO ministering to U.S. troops on leave. Becoming nearly fluent in Japanese, Agnes also developed her skills in Japanese flower arranging, called Ikebana. After two years they returned to the U.S. where Patrick obtained his PhD at the Fletcher School of Law & Diplomacy and their first child Timothy was born. More job changes took them to Montreal then to London again where their daughter Amanda was born. After several years, it was back to the U.S. where they lived in Dallas and then settled in Winchester, just outside of Boston. While raising two children, Agnes pursued writing in a professional capacity with local newspapers and obtained a journalism degree from Simmons College. Politics was her joy and when Representative Edward Markey decided to run for the Senate, Agnes joined his successful campaign as his press secretary.

Agnes worked at Harvard Business School and built up a career writing case studies. She then went on to the Harvard School of Public Health in development financing. A change in Patrick's work brought him to Washington, DC where Agnes eventually joined him and took a position at NPR in development finance. She finished her career as head of corporations

and foundations fundraising at Georgetown University. When Patrick and Agnes retired, they decided to make the Bay Area their home and settled in Sonoma wine country when Amanda and John relocated there in 2005. Agnes was a devoted and loving grandmother to her four grandchildren over 2 decades, spending time with all of them between Connecticut, California, and Texas.

Agnes is survived by her loving husband, Patrick, her son, Tim and wife Amber, along with their two children, Erin and Sean, her daughter Amanda and husband John Dawson along with their children Carolina and Owen. Many nieces, nephews, and cousins live in Ireland, England, Canada, South Africa, and the U.S.

# Tribute Wall



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**Amanda Dawson** - March 16 at 06:42 PM