

## Eleanor Pratt



NAME: Eleanor Pratt  
AGE: 79  
DATELINE: Billings / Glasgow, Montana  
DATE OF DEATH: Thursday – October 17, 2013  
PLACE OF DEATH: at her home in Billings, Montana  
SERVICE: Saturday – October 26, 2013 at 12:30 P.M. at the  
St. Raphael's Catholic Church in Glasgow, Montana  
MORTUARY IN CHARGE: Bell Mortuary of Glasgow, MT

### ELEANOR PRATT

Eleanor Dale Alley was born in Cleveland, Ohio a month and a half premature on December 13, 1933 when her parents, Clarence Dale Alley and Elizabeth Helena (Betty) Horvath Alley, were in a car accident. She wasn't expected to live eight hours. But Eleanor always rose to a challenge, and overcoming the doctor's pronouncement, went on to live almost eighty vibrant years.

Eleanor died on October 17, 2013, just after the midnight of her 59th wedding anniversary, with her two sons at her side.

Eleanor was raised in the Hungarian neighborhood of Cleveland. Eleanor was so sickly as a young girl that she was held back in the first grade because she missed too many days of school. Eleanor was an only child, but grew up close to her Broz cousins, Ken, Gary, Linda and Bobby. She graduated from high school in Cleveland and was a secretary at a defense contractor when a young electrical engineer from Youngstown, Aloysius (Al) William Pratt, "accidentally bumped" into her in the company parking lot and asked her out. After their marriage on October 16, 1954, Eleanor worked as a legal secretary in Cleveland.

The young couple, with their first child, Libby born in 1958 moved to New Carlisle, Ohio, where Bill (1961), and later Tom (1971) were born. While Eleanor was a stay-at-home mom who had her own vegetable garden; made three meals a day from scratch; was active at Sacred Heart Catholic Church; won second place at the Ohio State Fair for her apple-pecan pie; and actively participated in her children's school as a room mother and PTA member; she was instrumental in the founding and financial management of A.W. Pratt, Inc. an electrical engineering firm that Al and Eleanor oversaw for 37 years until they sold the company in 2005.

In 1973, Al and Eleanor bought a ranch north of Hinsdale, Montana. It was Al's idea, and Eleanor agreed to the purchase because Al told her it was a great investment, a hired man ran the place so there wasn't any work involved, and it would be a great "summer vacation retreat."

After spending the first summer vacation on the ranch, Al decided that the family was going to move to Montana. Eleanor, being at heart a big-city girl, wasn't too excited about the move. She had to give up her beautiful new house in Ohio and leave the many close friends that she had made in New Carlisle over fifteen years. As she wrote in her (world-famous) annual Christmas letter the year of the move, "We have moved to Glasgow, Montana. It's not the end of the world. But you can see it from here."

In her new western life, Eleanor chopped up rattlesnakes, charmed bachelor cowboys who presented her with beaver pelts to make winter parkas, thought nothing of driving 280 miles to Billings to go shopping in blinding blizzards, got deeply involved in Republican politics, made many new close friends, and took care of many souls who knocked on her door needing help. Eleanor had many handmade quilts in her home, which she bought from a woman who frequently needed to bail her son out of jail.

Eleanor thrived in Glasgow and was a member of Saint Raphael's Catholic Church and cooked many a church supper where she would prepare up to 100 pies at a time; she was a member of the Frances Mahon Deaconess Hospital Board and was instrumental in enticing the hesitant wives of many doctor

candidates to say 'yes' to moving to the end of the world as she had; regaling them with her stories about the adventures and the good life that awaited anyone brave enough to venture out to northeastern Montana.

She was appointed by Governor Stan Stephens to the Montana Board of Investments and to the board that oversaw the Montana Employees Retirement System.

Eleanor made history in 1988 when she was elected the first female Valley County Commissioner. She served twelve years in that post and by working closely with the FAA, was instrumental in securing Boeing's purchase of the flight facilities at the abandoned Glasgow AFB. The second time she ran for County Commissioner, she was so popular that she ran unopposed.

Eleanor was a fighter from the day she was born. She always stood up for the "little guy" while being pro-business and pro-rancher. Eleanor was known for her strong conservative politics, but one time, after approving special medical allocations for Glasgow citizens on welfare, she confided, "I think I'm really a Democrat." Eleanor defied labeling and helped her constituents no matter what their political persuasion.

Eleanor was involved in the Valley County community through: the American Cancer Society, Eastern Montana Regional Mental Health, Public Employees Retirement Systems, District 1 Vice Chairman for the Montana Association of Counties, Valley County Coalition Finance Committee, Valley County Refuse District, Valley County Senior Citizen's Board, Valley County Healthy Board, Soroptimist International, Hospital Guild, Valley County Cattlewomen, Yellowstone County Cattlewomen, Women Involved in Farm Economics, Glasgow Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture, Homemaker's Club, Valley County Republican Women's Club, and the Saint Raphael's Catholic Church Parish Council. Eleanor leaves behind many Yellowstone Valley friends from the Newcomer's Club.

At the age of 44, Eleanor was diagnosed with breast cancer, which was cured. In 2000, she was diagnosed and cured of endometrial cancer. She was diagnosed a few months ago with liver and colon cancer which was too much for her weak heart to fight.

A long-time family friend said of Eleanor, "To know Ellie is to love her."

Eleanor is survived by many friends and family who loved her: her husband of 59 years, Aloysius "Al" William Pratt of the family ranch north of Billings; daughter Lizbeth "Libby" and son-in-law Craig Resnick of Belaye, France; son William "Bill" Dale Pratt of Hinsdale, Montana; son Thomas "Tom" Aloysius Pratt and wife Hyun Kim of Phoenix, Arizona; four grandchildren Preston Blakeley, Alexandra Pratt, Cassandra Pratt and Thomas Pratt, Jr.; her dear Broz cousins Kenneth, Gary, Linda and Robert together with their spouses and children; many dear friends; and her constant companion, Etta Mae English Bulldog.

Cremation has taken place.

Mass will be at 12:30pm on October 26th at St. Raphael's Catholic Church, with a luncheon to follow.

In lieu of cut flowers, the family asks that you plant a tree in Eleanor's memory. Eleanor requests that any donations go to the Valley County Pioneer Museum in Glasgow; Help For Homeless Pets in Billings; or the charity of your choice.