



Cecelia Margaret Doherty

March 8, 1926 - March 24, 2025

Family and friends mourn the passing of Cecelia Margaret (Peggy) Doherty, nee Brodie, on March 24 at the age of 99. Peggy died at the Rockville Terrace Senior Living community in Fairfield, Calif.

Peggy Brodie was born on March 8, 1926, in San Francisco, and raised in Alameda, where she lived for more than 75 years before moving to Solano County. Her father, William Thomas Brodie, was an Ironworker who helped build several Bay Area bridges, including the Golden Gate. Her mother, Anna Montague Brodie, ran the household.

In 1947 Peggy graduated from UC Berkeley, where she also earned a teaching credential. She taught middle and high school grades in Alameda for several years before leaving teaching to care for her children.

Peggy was a devout and active Catholic. She was a lifelong parishioner of St. Barnabas Church in Alameda until moving to Vallejo, where she joined St. Basil the Great Church. She served in leadership roles at St. Barnabas Parish and was a founding member of the Companions of the Precious Blood. She remained devoted to the Companions throughout her life.

At St. Basil's Parish she was active in the St. Vincent de Paul Society and the Vocation Committee, and served as a lector. She was a member of the Prayer Shawl Ministry where she drew on her lifelong knitting pastime to knit her prayers into dozens of shawls for people who needed comfort.

As a young woman Peggy belonged to the Eire Og (Young Ireland) group in San Francisco, where she met her future husband, John B. Doherty, a native of County Donegal in Ireland. They married in 1949 and began a life together as soulmates who brought out the best in each other by emphasizing love, faith, family, community involvement, hard work, laughter and song.

Between 1950 and 1961, Peggy and John had seven children. When the youngest started school, Peggy began teaching English as a Second Language at the Alameda Adult School, which became a passion. She earned a master's degree in teaching ESL from San Francisco State University in the early 1970s—with enthusiastic support from her husband and with her faculty exam panel asking just one key question: “How did you do it, with seven children at home.”

Peggy's career of some 40 years truly took off when she was hired by the City College of San Francisco, Centers Division, where she served as a teacher, resource instructor, counselor and administrator. A defining moment at the John Adams campus came when a young student came into the office looking for his counselor. “You know the one,” he told the office staff. “She's tiny, but mighty.”

“Oh, you mean Peggy,” was the answer. Thereafter, she kept a nameplate on her desk: Peggy Doherty. Tiny But Mighty.

As an active member of professional organizations, Peggy led numerous workshops and became an expert in assessment while consulting with the Calif. Dept. of Education and the federally funded Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) program. Peggy continued to consult with CASAS until she was close to 80 years old.

Starting in the 1960s, wanting to help counter discriminatory practices in Alameda, Peggy and John became leaders in organizations including Alamedans for a Better Community (ABC) and Alamedans With HOPE (Housing Opportunities Provided Equally).

For all her career success, family was central for Peggy. She was fortunate to live within walking distance of her parents throughout their lives, and near her brothers. Peggy cooked for family gatherings, stood up with and for her kids in their pursuits and challenges, hosted backyard weddings and welcomed and loved sons- and daughters-in-law, as well as grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She continued to knit, even within days of her death.

Peggy was predeceased by her beloved husband of 47 years, John, by her eldest daughter, Mary Catherine Martinez and by her older brother, James Robert Brodie.

She is survived by her younger brother, John Thomas (Jack) Brodie, of Tucson; and her children, Patricia Cole (John), Barbara Doherty (Ron Carver), Christine Close (Paul), James Doherty (Barbara), William Doherty (Jennifer), and John Doherty (Colleen).

Peggy is also survived by her grandchildren, Shaun Tanner, Megan Tanner, Ryan Cole

(Dana Wilson), Leah Carver, Elena Carver, Maya Carver, Alex Close (Joanna), Brian Close (Jennifer Ferris), Michael Stout, Jeffrey Stout, Melissa Sumner (Kenneth), Kevin Doherty (Marco), and Emily Doherty (Eric Dattore); 14 great-grandchildren (with one great-great grandchild on the way), more than 40 cherished nieces and nephews in the U.S. and Ireland and many friends.

Visitation will be held on Thursday, April 10 4-8 PM with vigil/rosary service at 6 PM at Twin Chapels Mortuary, 1100 Tennessee St., Vallejo, CA.

Mass of Christian Burial will be on Friday, April 11 at 10 AM at St. Basil the Great Catholic Church, Nebraska and Tuolumne Sts., Vallejo with Fr. Leon Juchniewicz presiding. Committal service and burial will be held Friday, April 11 at 2:30 PM at St. Joseph's Catholic Cemetery, San Pablo.

In lieu of flowers the family requests donations to:

St. Basil Conference of St. Vincent de Paul Society

1225 Tuolumne St. Vallejo, CA 94590 (or your local conference)

or

Solano Winds Community Concert Band

P.O. Box 722, Fairfield, CA 94533-0072

Arrangements entrusted to the direction and care of Twin Chapels Mortuary, Vallejo (707) 552-6696. www.TwinChapelsMortuary.com

LIVESTREAM OF FUNERAL SERVICE:

Time: April 11, 2025 10:00 AM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4478481855?pwd=XFoGnTNoh4TIBO117MHBscxdAl6Mp2.1&omn=89807407503>

Meeting ID: 447 848 1855

Passcode: easter

ONLINE VIDEO:

Available beginning the afternoon of April 14, 2025

https://www.distant.memorial/client_portal.php

Client ID: 20250411doherty

Password: pdoherty

Cemetery Details

St. Joseph's Cemetery

2560 Church Lane
San Pablo, CA 94806

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 10. 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (PT)

Twin Chapels Mortuary
1100 Tennessee Street
Vallejo, CA 94590
(707) 552-6696
twinchapels@aol.com

Mass of Christian Burial

APR 11. 10:00 AM.

St. Basil The Great Catholic Church

Committal Service

APR 11. 2:30 PM.

St. Joseph'S Catholic Cemetery

Tribute Wall

BS

“What would Peggy do?” is a question I ask myself when facing a difficult situation. Quietly and efficiently she would find something to do to improve a situation. Working with her at CCSF was a delight. She never needed to raise her voice to speak to a group of students or faculty because she quietly commanded attention and respect. She welcomed the entire Alemany staff at her craftsman bungalow in Alameda. After she retired Tom (my husband) and I enjoyed many occasions with her. Our late, wonderful friend and colleague George Woodward always talked of how much he and Peggy enjoyed doing CASAS presentations together. When colleague Karen Bachelor was enduring cancer treatments, Peggy knitted her a blanket. For the large faculty at Alemany, Peggy wrote notes to each person highlighting a positive contribution each gave. I admired the work she and John did in Alameda in the church and community. She was truly loved and respected by her colleagues and friends. I feel grateful for the work we did together and the many laughs we shared. I think many who knew Peggy ask themselves, as I do, what she would do to improve a situation. As a model of quiet strength, thoughtful activism and generous love, Peggy will always be an inspiration for me.

Bill Shoaf - April 11, 2025 at 01:14 AM

BD

Bill, Such beautiful thoughts! Thank you so much. Mom truly cherished all of you, her colleagues, and the joy that the work you all did brought her. It enriched her life, and ours! -- Barbara Doherty

Barbara Doherty - April 23, 2025 at 04:14 PM

RF

“Rose & Brian Curry Family purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Cecelia Margaret Doherty.



Rose & Brian Curry Family - April 10, 2025 at 01:44 PM

JN

“ Peggy meant so much to me. I met her in 1998 at Chipman Middle School when several West End neighbors were at a meeting to save East Housing from demolition and gentrification. Peggy brought so much organizing and activist wisdom to our efforts and generously deigned our new group - Renewed HOPE. She immediately got St. Barnabas involved in our interfaith, community led organization - hosting our regular meetings and educating the parish. Even though we weren't able to save East Housing - all of us, me especially gained so much from working alongside Peggy. When she ran for City Council in 2000, I brought my toddler daughter to weekly campaign meetings at her home. Ever the gracious host, Peggy fed us while strategizing how to bring progressive change to Alameda. Peggy was eternally patient, kind, and funny. She taught me so much about the history of Alameda, local politics and graceful resistance to those in power. I'm forever grateful to have known Peggy and call her a friend. I still tap into her wisdom and advice in my current community work on the island. The world has certainly lost a great soul. Peggy embodied hope in the face of adversity. She never gave up and that keeps me going. Rest in peace dear friend. You live on in all of us fighting for change. - Jeanne Nader

Jeanne Nader - April 08, 2025 at 11:18 AM

BD

Jeanne, thank you for this wonderful tribute! We remember all the good work Mom/Peggy did but I didn't know all the details you described--no surprise though! She came close in that City Council race, and brought her usual energy and passion. I wish you well. --Barbara Doherty

Barbara Doherty - April 23, 2025 at 04:18 PM

CP

“ Christina P. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Cecelia Margaret Doherty.

Christina P. - April 06, 2025 at 09:15 PM

RB

“ Roberta B. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Cecelia Margaret Doherty.

Roberta B. - April 04, 2025 at 04:08 PM

RB

“ Roberta B. purchased the Basket Full of Wishes for the family of Cecelia Margaret Doherty.



Roberta B. - April 04, 2025 at 04:08 PM

JM

“ Our memories of Peggy at Rockville Terrace always reminded us of how smart she was. You never saw Peggy without a book a book in her hand. She had a great sense of humor and always a quick reply concerning any subject. All us guys and gals at Rockville Terrace will miss her terribly. Sincere condolences to the family. Sincerely, Jan Mikalow

Jan Mikalow - April 02, 2025 at 11:57 AM

BD

Thank you so much Jan! It was lovely to see Mom in her community at Rockville Terrace, with her newest friends. We appreciate your kind words and friendship. -- Barbara Doherty

Barbara Doherty - April 23, 2025 at 04:20 PM

TC

“ I feel so honored to have worked at Alemany/CCSF with such a beautiful generous spirit as Peggy. She knew how to get things done and I always admired her integrity and compassion.

*"May you continue to inspire us:
To enter each day with a generous heart.
To serve the call of courage and love
Until we see your beautiful face again
In that land where there is no more separation,
Where all tears will be wiped from our mind,
And where we will never lose you again.
---John O'Donohue, late Irish poet"*

Tomi Cunningham - March 31, 2025 at 04:31 PM

BD

Thank you so much, Tomi, what a beautiful, fitting poem to remember Peggy. We loved hearing all her stories when she would come home from work! Take care, Barbara Doherty

Barbara Doherty - April 23, 2025 at 04:22 PM

TM

“ Peggy's effectiveness at City College belied her petite appearance. She was a strong woman, fair-minded and smart. I had the privilege of being on the ESL Committee with her, among other activities. She was the go-to (besides or maybe before Chris Bunn) at the Teachers Resource Center at 33 Gough, where they now have the Tiny Homes Village. I think I first met her when I was still in the MA program at SFSU in 1977. I enjoyed meeting some of her family at the retirement some colleagues (Penny Larson? Chris Bunn? Sharon Seymour?) gave for her. When was that? I remember that she was very devoted to her 7 children. As the saying goes, May she rest in peace and power.

Tina N Martin - March 28, 2025 at 07:28 PM

BD

Thank you Tina! We hope to see you and others of Peggy's colleagues at her services -and hear some of those great stories! -- BARBARA DOHERTY

Barbara Doherty - March 29, 2025 at 08:08 PM



“ Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet was purchased for the family of Cecelia Margaret Doherty.



March 27, 2025 at 04:25 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Cecelia Margaret Doherty.

March 27, 2025 at 04:25 PM