



Carol C. O'Brien

July 25, 1939 - March 7, 2026

Carol Catherine (Crawley) O'Brien, age 86, passed away on Saturday, March 7, 2026, at Carlyle Healthcare Center in Carlyle, IL. She was oldest of three children, born July 25, 1939, in Baltimore, Maryland, to Thomas William and Mary Jean (Merkel) Crawley. Carol attended Catholic grade school in Baltimore, MD and Trenton, NJ. The family moved to St. Louis, MO, in August 1951, where she attended Ritenour Junior High School and graduated from Mercy High School with the class of 1957. Following high school she worked at Brown Shoe Company. She married Donald David O'Brien on May 1, 1965. Her family grew to include a son Daniel, stepson Dennis, daughter Joy and foster daughter Penny. The family moved from St. Louis, MO, to Highland, IL, in July 1973. In 1986, she returned to work force at St. Louis University Hospital retiring in 2002. She previously taught at St. Louis College of Health Careers and had been a part-time receptionist at Faith Countryside Homes. In 2003, she joined Rosenthal Optometric in Highland, IL, which she considered her second family, and continued to work there through her retirement.

Carol and her former husband Donald O'Brien were foster parents for the State of Illinois. Carol was active in her community. She was an active member of St. Paul Catholic Church since 1973. Having served on St. Paul Parish Council as Chairman of the Christian-in-Formation Commissions and helped to organize St. Paul's Vacation Bible School and Sunday School Programs. She was a volunteer at St. Paul School as office assistant and

room mother. Earlier years she was actively involved with Kirchenfest. She spent many hours with sisters of Notre Dame at the St. Paul Convent, sitting and talking at their kitchen table. She was a member of the Highland Junior Woman's Club, volunteered at the Original Pregnancy Care Center, Right to Life of Highland, Small Victories, the NiCE Foundation here in Highland, and Community Co-op. Carol was involved with Scouting as a precious Girl Scout Leader in St. Louis, and helped as needed with her granddaughter's Girl Scout Troop and her son's Boy Scout Troop. Carol was a previous Highland Business owner along with friend in operating a shop known as "Beads n Thing", where they were involved with many Highland's Civic Organizations and organized events such as "The Yellow Bow" campaign for the Iranian Prisoners. She was known for her decorations during the holidays and the "Card Lady" by friends and family for never forgetting birthdays or special occasions.

Carol believed in Prayer, forgiveness and second chances. Was willing to share what she had with anyone in need. She will be remembered for dedication to her family, especially her granddaughters.

Survivors are her children - Daniel (Laura) O'Brien, Stepson - Dennis O'Brien; Grandchildren - Jennifer (Nick) Rey and Megan O'Brien; Siblings - Mary Jean Hartenbach and Thomas (Myra) Crawley II; and many nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents - Thomas and Jean (nee Merkel) Crawley; Daughter - Joy Asher; Grandparents - William & Catherine (nee Frail) Crawley and Joseph & Marie (Nee Dulny) Mergl; Brother-In-Law - Thomas Hartenbach and Former Husband - Donald O'Brien

Arrangements are being handled by Spengel-Boulanger Funeral Home in Highland, IL.

Visitation will be held from 8:15 AM to 10:15 AM on Friday, March 13, 2026, at Saint Paul Catholic Church in Highland, IL.

Funeral Mass will be at 10:30 AM on Friday, March 13, 2026, at Saint Paul Catholic Church in Highland, IL, with Father Pat G. Jakel, Pastor, St. Paul Catholic Church, officiating.

Interment will be at Saint Joseph Catholic Cemetery in Highland, IL.

In lieu of flowers or any other gifts, please make a memorial contribution to St. Paul Church or St. Vincent De Paul.

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR 13. 8:15 AM - 10:15 AM (CT)

Saint Paul Catholic Church
1411 Main St
Highland, IL 62249
(618) 654-2339

Funeral Mass

MAR 13. 10:30 AM (CT)

Saint Paul Catholic Church
1411 Main St
Highland, IL 62249
(618) 654-2339

Tribute Wall



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Carol C. O'Brien.

March 12 at 10:09 AM



“ Forever Our Angel Bouquet was purchased for the family of Carol C. O'Brien.



March 12 at 10:09 AM



“ Carol was the kind of person who could get things done. no task too large or small and always done with kindness. she will be missed in this community.

Terri - March 11 at 11:09 AM



“ Florist Choice Bouquet was purchased for the family of Carol C. O'Brien.



March 11 at 09:28 AM

LF

“ *A very good neighbor and friend. We shared many stories, both good and bad. Will miss seeing her out in her flower bed piddling around. She made a really good homemade salsa that we would share while watching movies. ❤️*

Linda, (neighbor & friend) - March 10 at 12:44 PM