



Patricia M. Coolican

February 14, 1929 - September 3, 2022

Longtime Corvallis resident Dr. Patricia M. Coolican died Saturday, September 03, 2022.

The youngest of four children, Pat was born in Watkins Glen, New York on Valentine's Day, February 14, 1929, to Patrick and Harriet Githler Coolican. At his school that day, her brother John announced his family had "a real live valentine" at their house.

Pat attended Watkins Glen schools where she was drum majorette for the local Elks Fife and Drum Corps. She graduated in 1950 from the College of Home Economics at Cornell University. Her first job was as home economics division leader with Cornell Cooperative Extension in Oswego County. Little did she realize then that this was the beginning of a 28-year career with Cooperative Extension in three different states.

She accepted a similar position in 1956 in Chautauqua County at Jamestown, New York. Granted a sabbatical leave in 1959, she attended Michigan State University to earn a Master's degree in adult education. Her research was a study of the effectiveness of teaching by television compared to teaching by the use of printed Extension materials.

After returning to her Jamestown assignment for a year, Pat in 1961 was named the first Extension television specialist for the College of Home Economics at Cornell University. She returned to work at the county level in 1964, accepting a position in Syracuse, New York, to lead a large urban Home Economics program in Onondaga County. A staff of five home economists

carried out not only a traditional Extension program but also an extensive media program employing television, radio, and newspapers. A new program of "Letters to the Mothers of Young Children" proved popular. Onondaga was also one of the counties participating in a new program utilizing paraprofessional staff to reach low-income families.

Granted another sabbatical leave in 1972, Pat completed course work for a doctoral program in adult education at Syracuse University. She then returned to her position with Onondaga County but soon realized there was no way she could complete her degree while employed full-time. Graduate fellowships from the American Home Economics Association and the Farm Foundation enabled Pat to leave her Onondaga County position and return full-time to student status. Her dissertation was on the learning style of mothers of young children.

After completing her doctoral studies, Pat moved to Ithaca, New York, to work on a special Extension project in program development. In 1975, she accepted a state-level position with the West Virginia Extension Service as the Home Economics division leader. In 1978, she was named to be associate dean for Extension in the College of Home Economics at Oregon State University. She retired in 1985.

Pat's favorite hobby was family genealogy for which she polished her skills during several workshops at the Salt Lake genealogy library. Her research for the Coolican, Walsh, and Lenny families took her to County Mayo, Ireland, and, for the Githler family to Wuerttemberg, Germany. In addition to researching her own family, Pat researched spouse families of her nieces and nephews. Her database included some 11,000 documented names.

Professional association involvement included serving as vice-president for program development for American Home Economics Association, as a member of the board of directors at Cornell College of Human Ecology Alumni Association, and as a member of the Cornell University Council. She received the Distinguished Service Award from the National Association of Extension Home Economists and, in 1971, was named one of 12 Women of

Achievement in Syracuse, New York.

Throughout her personal and professional life, her contributions to her community were many. Pat held several positions at the Timberhill Townhouse Association and was a weekly volunteer staff member at the local Family History Center. She was also a member of Assistance League of Corvallis, OSU Folk Club, Benton County Genealogy Society, and Alpha Xi Delta Alumnae.

She was preceded in death by her parents, brothers Richard M. Coolican and John G. Coolican and sister Jane Coolican Sopp, and a niece, Elizabeth Coolican. She is survived by two nieces and four nephews.

At Pat's request, no Corvallis services will be held. In her memory, remembrances may be made to OSU Folk Club Thrift Shop Foundation, 144 NW 2nd Street, Corvallis, OR 97330.