



Muriel "Molly" Janice Hollingshead

May 8, 1942 - April 15, 2026

Molly Martin, born Muriel Janice Hollingshead passed away on April 15th, 2026, after a long, fulfilling life of service and love to all who knew her.

Molly (we never, ever, EVER called her Muriel unless we wanted to see murder in her eyes) was born May 8, 1942 to Clayton and Lois Hollinghead in Martinez, California. She was the firstborn of three daughters, including sisters Elaine and Judy.

Molly was the first in her family history to attend college, graduating with a Bachelor's degree in Education, accomplished through sheer determination, will and her amazing wit and intelligence.

She grew up poor, with literally a dirt floor in a home that her father built. But what the Hollingsheads didn't have in money, they possessed in a wealth of love, warmth, and compassion – life lessons that would be taught to many in the generations to come.

Each of the Hollingshead sisters grew up to be teachers. Molly taught her first class before she graduated from California State University Fresno, at 21. She began teaching at 19, on an emergency credential, during a teacher shortage. She taught a class of 43 Hispanic children, none of whom spoke English, in Parlier, California. While Molly would eventually become fluent in Spanish, she

wasn't when she began teaching as a young college student. Undaunted, as she so often was with whatever life threw at her, she met the challenge head on, teaching herself Spanish and immediately interacting with the children through song, dance, and smiles regardless of any language barrier.

Molly taught for over 40 years. She shaped many young minds, as the first teacher for literally thousands of young children. Most of her career was in first grade and kindergarten, beginning in Parlier, then moving to McFarland, the school system near Bakersfield, where she lived. Finally, after her first retirement, she decided “this is for the birds, I belong in a classroom” and went back to teaching, working for another ten years in the Oklahoma school system.

Molly raised sons Ward and Jeremy Chanley with her first husband, Ed Chanley. When that marriage ended, she married Eddie Covert in 1974. Her family doubled in size, and she became stepmother to two more boys, Richard and Bobby Covert.

The Coverts had family all over the US, and one of Eddie's brothers; James “Jim” Covert lived in Woodsfield, Ohio with his wife Jane, and their three children. We began taking family trips during the summers to Ohio, driving cross country, seeing all the sights, and enjoying so many wonderful times together as a family.

Family. That word means different things to so many people. For us? Family was everything for Molly; and all of us. Holidays were spent with her sisters, in-laws, and her parents, and the whole collection of cousins, and siblings, spending long, noisy Thanksgiving and Christmas long weekends together. It was always a grand affair, with way too much good food, lots of laughter, a house full of LOUD, energetic kids and adults ready to put them all down for a nap.

Molly and Eddie parted ways in 1986, and she met the love of her life, Melvin Martin in the late 80s.

Mel, as he is known, recognized in Molly a kindred spirit. They shared a love of history, patriotism, family values and Mexican food (among other things, but I'd be remiss if I didn't mention that) and Molly took one more trip down the aisle to say "I do" with Mel. It was, by far, one of her wisest and best decisions in life.

Mel treated Molly like gold. Its an easy thing to say, and perhaps trite or cliché, but it actually applies with them. Mom was known for being stubborn; she came by it honestly as her mother was the same way, but Mel never lost his patience nor got upset. He loved Molly for who she was, and made sure she had a warm and loving home with him throughout the 35+ years they had together. They moved from California together in 1989, first to Missouri, then settling in Oklahoma.

Molly worked tirelessly at the county Fair in Washington County, as she did for so many years in Bakersfield, as a volunteer. She worked in her communities to help in any capacity she could, while maintaining a full schedule of teaching before she retired for the second time, simply because she enjoyed people, and helping others.

Molly was so much, to so many. Wife, Sister, Aunt, Grandma, Mother, Teacher, Mentor, Friend. She never knew a stranger. Molly was well known for striking up a conversation with complete strangers, sometimes in the line at the grocery store, or walking about a memorial or battlefield she was touring, often at church events or boy scout campouts (Molly was an excellent Boy Scout; having served the Meridian District as an Adult Volunteer Leader for

well over a decade. The woman chewed a lot of dust over many hikes and camping trips).

Molly is survived by her husband Mel, her sons Ward and Jeremy Chanley, her son in law Rocky Rockstraw, her daughter in law Tammy Chanley, and her grandchildren Rachel Cessna, Toby Grigg, and Lane Dickson, as well as her sister Elaine Leeth, brother in law Elmer Masters, nieces Heather Castle, Kim Williams, Stacie Masters, Joy Smith and nephews Geoff Sanders and Aaron Masters; and many great grandchildren, nieces, and nephews.

She was one of a kind, truly, and will be sorely missed. The world is smaller place without her in it.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the animal organizations Molly supported. Molly loved the World Wildlife Fund (www.worldwildlife.org) and she supported her local SPCA in Washington County (www.wcspca.org).

Tribute Wall

BG

“ Molly and I go back to 1960 and my freshman year at Mt. Whitney High in Visalia Ca. I was a scared little kid who knew no one but my brother there. Molly befriended this lost soul. I spent time with her family in Farmersville. Her Mom introduced me to chocolate gravy. The best thing I had ever eaten!!! We went through a lot of painful times through the years and sometimes long times with no communication but always found our way back. When she hadn't responded in the past few days, I was so concerned. Finally this morning tried to call. Phone not accepting messages. Went to my friend Google and that's when I heard. God bless her. I know he always has. And God bless all her family. My love to you all. Bennie Denham Gee.

Benette Gee - April 25 at 02:16 PM

NI

“ Molly was one of a kind. I wish I could have known her way back when. I loved texting her and catching up on ancestry. We were so much alike.

Miss you 🌸🌸🙏🙏😊😊❤️👍❤️👍

Nancy Mae Ivy

NANCY IVY - April 22 at 08:54 PM

RR

“ you are missed 'mrs molly' by so many of us. i know you are continuing to teach and instruct!!! love your son-in-law!!! Rocky

Rocky Rockstraw - April 21 at 04:13 PM