

## DIOCESAN NEWS

## Mulvaney marital unions rest on faith, humor

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

CONESUS — To make a marriage last a lifetime, one might consider consulting the Mulvaney family of the Finger Lakes.

Bill Mulvaney, 75, mayor of Avon from 1960-70, and his wife, Betty, 72, have been married for 52 years. Both attend St. Mary's Church in Geneseo.

But Bill is just one of four siblings who have collectively been married for more than 200 years. All four couples seem blessed with healthy senses of humor and a strong belief that prayer can help married people live up to their vows.

Bill was working as a barber, and Betty was working as a nurse at a state mental hospital in Sonyea, when the two met. One of Betty's duties was to take electroencephalograms — tracings of electrical waves — of patient's brains. One day, she took one of Bill's head, he remembered.

"She took my brain wave and saw what a great thing is up here," Bill said in jest as he sat next to his wife. "She says it was the other way around. She felt sorry for me."

Betty added that her motive for marrying Bill — on April Fool's Day, by the way — was a little more self-centered. "I wanted my kids to have curly hair, and he had all this curly hair," she said, noting with feigned disappointment: "Not one of them got it."

The Mulvaney family has six children sans curly hair, 10 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Bill's brother, Dan, 72, has been married for 50 years to his wife, Shirley, 71, and the couple have eight children, 16 grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren. The couple are members of St. William's Parish in Conesus, where Shirley is treasurer of the Parish Society. A retired farmer, Dan was town supervisor of Conesus from 1970-88, and also served as a justice of the peace for 12 years prior.

Married the same year as Dan and Shirley were Dan's sister, Jane, now 74, and Don Windsor, now 72. The Windsors at-



Andrea Dixon/Staff photographer

(From left) Don and Jane (Mulvaney) Windsor; Bill and Betty Mulvaney; and Dan and Shirley Mulvaney gather in Conesus Jan. 10. The three Mulvaney siblings and their brother who resides in Florida have been married to their spouses over 200 years collectively. The Mulvaney family farm is visible in the distance at far right.

tend St. Joseph's Church, Livonia, where Jane is a lector and eucharistic minister and Don takes up collections at Mass. The couple has six children and 13 grandkids. Jane is a substitute nurse in the Livonia school district, and Don is a retired telephone worker.

The three couples met with the *Catholic Courier* in the Windsors' home, which is just up the road from the farm where the Mulvaney family grew up. There, Dan credited himself a lucky man for having landed Shirley, whom he met when he was best man at his late brother, Dick's, wedding, and she was a bridesmaid.

"She had everything, I guess," he said. "Looks, personality."

"Thanks, dear," Shirley said.

"You'll pay for it when you get home," Dan joked.

The Mulvaney's brother, Jim, and his wife of 55 years, Marion, complete the faithful foursome of couples, and live in Port Charlotte, about 100 miles south of Tampa, Fla. In a phone interview, the couple noted they have eight children, 12 grandchildren and are expecting a great-grandchild in March. Jim is a retired Xerox worker, and Marion became a homemaker after getting married.

The couple met on a blind date, and became engaged before Jim went off to serve in the armored infantry in North Africa during World War II. Marion waited for Jim, who was wounded by mortar shrapnel in the war, and married him in his sophomore year at the University of Notre Dame, where he went to school on the G.I. Bill.

"Right from the beginning I was crazy about him," Marion said.

All four couples held a party for family and friends in July of last year to mark the golden anniversaries of Dan and Shirley and Jane and Don.

Bill noted how he made the Windsors' wedding reception a legendary affair when he drove his new car, which was to be used for the honeymoon trip, into a well on the Mulvaney farm property, where the reception was held.

The newlywed Windsors then absconded with Dick Mulvaney's car.

"Everyone was excited about Bill's new car and the well so they didn't pay any attention to (us)," Jane said as the couples all laughed. Although it would be hard to believe after spending time with these couples as they continually kidded each other, all four have had their share of ups and downs.

Dan, who lost his right arm in a farm accident in 1957, pointed out that another Mulvaney brother, Bob, was worked to death by the Japanese in World War II after he was taken prisoner in 1942 in the Philippines. Bob was forced into the infamous Bataan Death March that took the lives of 7,000 to 10,000 U.S. and Filipino soldiers. Dan noted that the Mulvaney's mother had a beautiful voice and used to sing in the house all the time — until she learned how her son had perished from starvation and slave labor.

"We never heard her sing after that," Dan said, as the couples briefly quieted.

Jane lightened the mood a moment later when she recalled how Bob used to play the jew's harp in their home, and Bill quickly added that Bob looked like the actor Mickey Rooney.

Indeed, it's these couples sense of reverence for life's important moments, punctuated by their humor, that seems to point to a sense of balance in their collective lives, a sense of when to laugh and when to be silent.

On that note, all four couples spoke seriously about their belief in God and God's role in their marriages.

"I used to pray a lot when I had problems," Marion said of turning to God in times of marital discord. "I wouldn't be the person I am today without my religion."

Her husband, Jim, noted that he considered becoming a priest when he was younger, and attended St. Andrew's Seminary in Rochester for three years. Among his classmates was a young man from Lima who became the seventh leader of the Diocese of Rochester — Bishop Joseph L. Hogan, who died last August.

"He was my idol," Jim said of the late bishop. "He was so honest and sincere."

Jim added that the Catholic faith was a major force in the Mulvaney's lives, and he recalled their father made a point of getting everyone to Mass each Sunday.

"It was our sacred duty to get to Mass," he said. "Likewise, it was our sacred duty to remain married when we took our vows."

## Marriage preparation required for couples

The Diocese of Rochester requires couples wishing to be married in the Catholic Church to participate in marriage preparation, pre-Cana, or Engaged Encounter programs. The diocese recommends completing such a program six months before the wedding.

Diocesan-sponsored marriage preparation sessions are scheduled to take place from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturdays at the following dates and at the following locations:

Jan. 20 at St. Mary's Church, 32 E. Morris St., Bath; Jan. 27 at St. Mary of the Assumption Church, 99 Main St., Scottsville; March 24 at St. Mary of the Lake Church, 905 N. Decatur St., Watkins Glen; April 21 at the Diocesan Pastoral Center, 1150 Buffalo Road, Gates; April 28 at St. Mary of the As-

sumption Church, Scottsville; May 19 at St. Mary's Church, 32 E. Morris St., Bath; May 26 at Holy Rosary Church, 414 Lexington Ave., Rochester; June 23 at the Diocesan Pastoral Center, 1150 Buffalo Road, Gates; and Aug. 18 in Hagerty Hall, 41 Spring St., St. Joseph's Church, Livonia.

The non-refundable registration fee for these sessions is \$65 per couple. Sessions fill fast, so the diocese encourages early registration.

For forms and to have your questions about marriage preparation sessions answered, contact Jeannie Raisbeck at 716/328-3228 or 800/388-7177, ext.

279. You can also visit the diocesan Web site at [www.dor.org](http://www.dor.org).

Numerous parish-based sessions also have been scheduled. Couples may obtain information and register for these sessions only by contacting the parishes. Parish-based sessions also fill up quickly, so early registration is recommended.

Engaged Encounter is a weekend away with other couples designed to intensely cover aspects of your lives together. For information on Engaged Encounter dates and registration, call Mike and Chris Donnelly at 716/924-4750.

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<p><b>LUNCH</b> Served Tuesday - Friday <b>COQUILLES SAINT JACQUES</b> Scallops poached in white wine with shallots, mushrooms &amp; cream. <b>BOEUF BOURGUIGNON</b> This famous burgundy beef stew combines all the flavors into one wonderful dish. <b>CATCH OF THE DAY</b> Each day the Lamplighter features a new and interesting seafood selection <b>SOUP AND SANDWICH</b> Our chef creates a delicious combination each day</p>	<p><b>DINNER</b> Served Monday-Saturday <b>STEAK AU POIVRE</b> Choice Angus filet, embedded with crushed peppercorns, pan seared and served with a rich brown sauce enhanced with Cognac. <b>FRUITS DE MER</b> Prawns, lobster, scallops and clams in a vegetable broth. This French delicacy has been forever popular in the province region of France. <b>PORTOFINO</b> Lobster, shrimp, scallops and crabmeat sauteed in olive oil and white wine. Served with artichoke hearts and black olives over a bed of pasta. <b>GRILLED VEAL CHOP</b> A fusion creation, marinated in Chinese herbs and served on the bone over caramelized onions with a Madeira wine sauce.</p>
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