

Gabrielle Cahill At-Large Councilmember

Being a single mother wasn't very common in the 1930s but Mary Constantino had a strong will to give her son a good life in America.

Having been raised in New Haven, Connecticut as one of twelve children, she understood the importance of family. Living together in a large, three story house that featured the family-run business on the first floor, Mary also understood that the social mores of the day called for marriages to happen in the order of the age of the siblings.



A younger sister Rose was engaged for several years waiting to be married so the parents sent Mary to the family's ancestral Naples area of Italy to find a husband. Mary did so, got married and the two were blessed by the Pope in a large gathering in St. Peter's Square. However, with war breaking out in Europe, Mary's husband was forced to stay behind while a pregnant Mary came back to the United States to give birth to Frank, the father of Gabrielle Cahill. Mary would eventually remarry.



At the annual Lake Nelson neighborhood Fourth of July parade, Gabrielle and her mother Catherine are joined by (l-r) Councilmembers Frank Uhrin, Chanelle C. McCullum, Jim Bullard, Michele Lombardi and Mayor Brian C. Wahler.

Gabrielle's family roots in America extend even further back on her mother's side, actually to the Revolutionary War when a direct ancestor, Nathan Whitmore, served as an officer in the American forces. Following generations would lead to the family's patriarch – Gabrielle's great grandfather – serving as a Dutch Reformed minister in Falls River, Massachusetts as well as he and Gabrielle's great grandmother serving in the Salvation Army underneath co-founder Catherine Booth. The family would boast membership in the Daughters of the American Revolution until Gabrielle's Great Aunt Cate quit the organization in protest of its infamous ban of African American singer Marian Anderson being able to perform at Constitution Hall. Deep faith and a commitment to social justice would be guiding principles of Gabrielle's family.

To say that Gabrielle's parents had a whirlwind romance would be an understatement. The two met at a party in Connecticut in May 1957 while both were on summer break from college, Frank from the University of Boston and Catherine from the University of Illinois. They spent hours together that evening talking the night away, but when Frank would begin calling, Catherine wouldn't take his calls until her brother John pressured her to do so.

On the date Frank would finally take Catherine, he proposed. On the subsequent date, Catherine said yes. Frank would drive down to Elkton, Maryland to get a marriage license, drive back up to Connecticut to pick Catherine up and the two would elope, having their wedding performed by a justice of the peace. They would be happily married for 54 years until Gabrielle's father passed away.

Forgoing college for married life, Frank and Catherine would have Gabrielle's three older brothers in New Haven before moving for a job opportunity to Long Island where Gabrielle and her two younger siblings would be born. At Gabrielle's age of six, the family would move to New Jersey, first to North Caldwell, then two years later to Branchville. When their house burned down five years later, the family would find a new home in Sparta where Gabrielle would go to high school then attend the County College of Morris. While attending Rutgers where she would eventually get her bachelor's degree, Gabrielle was introduced to her now-husband Shawn whom at the time was working at Sears with her mother. Upon marriage the couple found a home on River Road in Piscataway – the same home they live in now.

Not only did her wedding with Shawn bring her a life-long friend and husband but also a beautiful toddler, Michael Cahill. Gabrielle and Shawn jointly raised Michael to be a fine young man whom has been married to his wife Jessica since 2016; they reside in Brooklyn.



At Piscataway Little League opening day, Gabrielle (3rd from left) is joined by (l-r) Mayor Brian C. Wahler, Piscataway's own Middlesex County Freeholder Kenneth Armwood and Councilmembers Jim Bullard, Kapil K. Shah & Chanelle C. McCullum.

Gabrielle has always been interested in politics but hadn't played a large active role in it when she was younger. She and her family took turns serving as town committee people in Sparta where Democrats were not residing in large numbers. In Piscataway, friends encouraged her to run for office which she did for the first time in 2008 for an at-large Township Council seat opened from now-Sheriff Mildred S. Scott running to be a county freeholder.

Now in her third term on the Township Council, Gabrielle is proud to serve the needs of all Piscataway residents with special attention to open space and environmental sustainability. She focuses her volunteer efforts on the Metlar-Bodine House Museum and the Avon 39 Walk to End Breast Cancer.