



Elizabeth "Betty" Stowe Pierce

April 6, 2019

Jane Elizabeth "Betty" Stowe Pierce died at the age of 97 in Fort Collins, Colorado on April 6, 2019.

Born in 1921 in northern California, Betty grew up in the country outside Menlo Park, California in a family that shared what little they had with family and friends during the Great Depression. Her parents, Frank and Geneva Stowe, always welcomed the friends of their 3 children, Bud, Betty and Mary, and at times had extended family members living with them. Betty enjoyed being with groups of friends and tended to be a leader of their escapades. She liked to do what the boys did and so asked her mother to cut her hair like a boy in the summer.

During high school she acted the part of Ophelia in Shakespeare's "Hamlet". She also worked part time at her mother's Creamery/Soda Fountain in Palo Alto, charming the young men. After high school, she attended San Jose State University majoring in Biology. As a senior she was hired as a Teaching Assistant at Stanford University. And after graduating she worked one summer as an assistant to Dr. George Beadle, who went on to share the Nobel Prize in DNA research with Drs. Joshua Lederberg and Edward Tatum, for whom her sister Mary worked.

Working one summer in Tuolumne Meadows in Yosemite National Park, she met her future husband Ernest Pierce whom she married in 1943; they moved to southern California for Ernie's work in the aircraft industry during WWII. She raised her three children, Randy, Marilyn and Donald, and then went back to school to earn her Masters Degree in Social Work. Initially she worked for a suicide prevention center before becoming Chief Social Worker for a child guidance clinic where she found helping families very rewarding, if sometimes frustrating.

Knitting, sewing, needlepoint, photography, and mosaic work are some of the many crafts she pursued throughout the years, and she always enjoyed reading. She liked sailing with the family, gardening, and entertaining friends. When we were kids, the other

neighborhood kids were often at our house. She welcomed them and tolerated all our shenanigans. After retirement, she volunteered at a center in Ramona that distributed food and clothing to people in need. She participated in the Julian, California Women's Club where she designed and helped construct the annual raffle quilts to raise scholarship funds for local students. She was very good at analyzing things and solving problems and so managed to figure out original quilt designs that could be made by a group of people. She liked to note that her initials "ESP" might have given her an edge. She had a quick wit and a sense of humor that would put a twinkle in her eye and a smile on her face. She also participated in an Investment Club and was Treasurer. From early childhood Betty was interested in watching sports, primarily basketball and baseball.

Over the years Ernie and Betty took many vacation sailing trips with close friends to the West Indies. Ernie loved sailing from place to place while Betty loved meeting the people on the islands, but her preferred vacation destination was the mountains which meant they also spent vacation time in Big Bear Lake in southern California. Betty and Ernie enjoyed visiting their children's homes every year in Bellvue, Colorado and Austin, Texas, often helping with building projects. Finally in their 80's they decided it was time to move to Fort Collins, Colorado to be close to family. Sometime later their daughter also moved north. This allowed Betty to host many family dinners which gave her great pleasure. It also allowed Betty and Ernie to develop new friendships in their new neighborhood. After Ernie died, those neighbors kept an eye out for Betty.

In her later years having lunch with her and spending an hour or two visiting was a high point for both her and us. In spite of the challenges of her childhood, Betty's stories around the family dining table spoke fondly of childhood memories including sometimes raucous adventures.

Betty is survived by her son Randy Pierce (Jackie) and daughter Marilyn Smith (Tim-deceased), and numerous nieces and nephews and their families. In the Fort Collins area there are 21 family members; on the West Coast and elsewhere, there are 17. Betty liked to keep in touch with everyone, enjoying getting photos, letters, phone calls and visits. Betty loved having dogs, and cats, from childhood on, and after Ernie died, she found comfort in her Poodle/Bichon named Abby.

The family wishes to thank Centre Avenue Health & Rehab, where Betty spent the last year of her life, and Pathways Hospice. The staff in both organizations were very caring. At a later date, there will be a private family & friends celebration of Betty's life. If people wish to honor Betty, they might help someone who needs help, or donate to an organization that helps people in need.

Comments



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