



Mrs. Irene MacDonald

June 2, 1919 - February 20, 2013

Irene Thorp MacDonald, 93, of Maitland, Florida died peacefully at the home of her daughter on Feb. 20, 2013.

She will always be remembered by her family as a woman truly ahead of her time. She graduated from law school in the forties when most women never went to college. She served her country in the South Pacific during World War II; created and managed her own businesses when few women worked outside the home and raised four children along the way.

Irene was born June 2, 1919, in Dorchester, Mass., the daughter of Elizabeth Ann and John William Thorp. After graduating from Weymouth High School in Weymouth, Mass., in 1937, she attended the New England School of Law (known then as Portia Law School). She graduated in 1942 with high honors and an L.L.B. degree.

With World War II well underway, she decided to serve her country and postponed taking her bar exam. She joined the Red Cross in 1943, volunteered for foreign service and was sent to the South Pacific in 1944 as a recreational worker for service clubs/canteens in New Caledonia, the Russell Islands and Guadalcanal. She chronicled her experiences in a series of "Life in the South Pacific" columns for the newspaper the Patriot Quincy Ledger.

After returning to the U.S. in 1945, she married Elmer George MacDonald, a Master Sergeant in the Army Air Corps and Bronze Star recipient, who had worked for her father at Thorp Motor Company in Weymouth, Mass. They settled in Norwell, Mass. where they raised four children while Elmer opened his own business, MacDonald Motor Services, and Irene built and managed "The Glen", a park for mobile homes from 1957 to 1982. In the late fifties she took and passed the Massachusetts bar exam. She became a member of the Massachusetts Bar Association all the while balancing her busy family and business careers.

In 1962, the family moved to Old Lyme, Conn. where her husband started a new business and she went to work for the State of Connecticut. After retiring from the State Welfare Department, she obtained her real estate broker's license and successfully ran her own business, Lyme Realty Company, for many years.

Six years after Elmer's 1981 death, she married Leland H. Reynolds, a successful automobile dealer and landowner. During her second marriage, she was active in the Lyme Garden Club, the Lyme Book Club, the local bridge group and was a literacy volunteer. She also gave of her time and prepared tax returns for the elderly on a volunteer basis.

Irene was known throughout her life for her generosity, her buoyant spirit, her ready laugh, her curiosity and her readiness to try something new. An avid reader, she was always ready for a current affairs discussion or review of the latest book. She was an oil painter, a writer, a poet, and loved to dance- even being voted "Best Dancer" at Portia Law School. She always regarded her children, however, as her greatest achievement and pointed proudly to their accomplishments

She was preceded in death by her brother Arthur. She is survived by her four children: James Marc MacDonald and his wife Jean of Alameda, Calif., Marsha Elizabeth MacDonald of Maitland, Fla., John Marshall MacDonald and his wife Karen of Amherst, NH., and Matthew Elmer MacDonald and his wife Sandra of Cape Coral, Fla. She is also survived by seven beloved grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

There will be a Celebration of Life service at the home of Marsha MacDonald on Thursday, March 7, 2013 at 11:00 am. In lieu of flowers the family requests that donations be made to Hospice of the Comforter, 480 W. Central Parkway, Altamonte Springs, Fla. 32714 (407) 682-0808.

Arrangements are entrusted DeGusipe Funeral Home & Crematory, 9001 N. Orlando Avenue, Maitland, Florida 32751. (407) 695-CARE(2273).

Tribute Wall



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