



Lilian Kesler

December 19, 1929 - October 31, 2018

Lilian died peacefully in her home in Alexandria, Virginia on October 31, 2018. She was born on December 19, 1929 in her family home on Carlisle Avenue in Morgantown, West Virginia, to parents Bertha Olive Smith and Reay Donald Hackney.

Born just two months after the historic stock market crash that marked the beginning of the Great Depression, Lilian understood the value of frugality and gratitude early in her life. Though the era in which she was born influenced her personal journey, it was Lilian's adventurous, optimistic soul that enabled her to leap over obstacles and lead a life filled with adventure, travel, faith, art, and music.

Lilian was raised with her three siblings, Billy Reay Hackney (m) Betty Poling White, Norman Paul Hackney, and Marjorie Marie Hackney (m) Franklin Grover Allgauer in a home built by her father and lovingly filled with the scents of fresh pastries by her mother.

Helping extended family was a call to duty and provided life lessons. At age eight Lilian went to live with her aging paternal grandmother which required tasks of meal preparation and administration of insulin. The whole family took part in assisting her aging maternal grandparents on the farm in Bruceton Mills, West Virginia. There she learned the art of living on a farm, claiming "Almost everything as a child required work." She learned to garden, milk the cows, care for the chickens, can produce, grind sausage, and make apple butter. She had fond memories of yodelling through the hills to her cousins as she walked to their one room schoolhouse.

As a teen, Lilian returned to the city home on Carlisle Avenue to attend school at Morgantown High, oversee boarders in the house, and provide primary care for her sister while both of her older brothers served in World War II. Her mother remained in Bruceton Mills to manage the farm, while her father traveled for available carpentry work. In high school, Lilian had two passions: making fudge and playing clarinet in the marching band. She was a member of the graduating class of 1947.

Lilian completed one year at West Virginia University opting to transfer and graduate from business school. Like many young adults in the area, Lilian gained employment at the Morgantown glass factory. Throughout her life she loved and collected glassware and crystal. She perfected skills in knitting, crocheting, and sewing, and took great pride in making her sister's wedding dress.

Lilian married Virgil Albert Hart at Sabraton Methodist Church on May 4, 1951. She embraced the life of travel, frequent moves, and adventure that accompanies marrying a career Air Force man. Their family expanded while living in Greenville, South Carolina with the birth of Michael Alan in 1954 and Cynthia Jane in 1955.

While Virgil was on assignment at Duke University, Lilian took a job with Durham Telephone Company, a job that sparked her lifelong love of keeping in touch with family by frequent late night phone chats.

NATO, in Naples, Italy was her favorite military assignment. Volunteering as tour director for military wives opened endless potential to experience different cultures, which always brought a sparkle to her eye. Painting classes led to one oil painting after another. Influenced by her father she was drawn to collect European wood art in all forms.

Virgil's last assignment was at the Pentagon. They purchased their first home in Alexandria and continued to expand their family with the birth of Lori Elizabeth in 1967. Lilian found herself widowed at age 42 with three children.

She was fortunate to have a second love in her life and married Edwin L. Kesler on June 21, 1975 at Franconia Presbyterian Church. Edwin brought two children to this union, Phillip Lee and Shirley Marshall. If prosperity were measured by what is handed down to the next generation, Lilian's children would be considered wealthy in appreciation of travel, music, art, craftsmanship, religious faith, and service to country.

In aging years, Lilian continued to travel with Edwin through the Elderhostel Program. She set foot on six of the seven continents. Lilian was a member and leader of Presbyterian Church Women United. She had a love for history and biography which lead to notes on her own family history, genealogy, and membership in the DAR. In caring for her own aging mother she became an ombudsman representative ensuring the rights and care of the aging population. Working for Fairfax County Library, Lilian developed an interest in books on tape. As fate would have it, this library system for the visually impaired became her comfort in her own aging years.

It is no secret she loved her babies and was blessed with ten grandchildren: Benjamin Joseph Rogers, Bethany Lauren Kesler, Katelyn Rogers Johnson, Anna Kathleen Kesler Farias de Carvalho, Kelsey Michelle Hart, Holly Christine Hart, Aline Ferraz Kesler, Charles Edwin Kesler, Alexander John Krueger, Christopher Jay Krueger, and six great grandchildren: Arianna Renee Johnson, Griffin Hart Rogers, Phillip Paulo Farias De Carvalho, Dottie Thompson Rogers, Andre Ferraz Antenor, and Renato Ferraz Antenor.

When counting blessings, at the top of Lilian's list would be her son and daughter-in laws: Michael Kevin Rogers, Donya Montgomery Kesler, Beverly Grubbs Hart, and Randall Jeffrey Krueger. She cherished the unconditional love that they all shared with her and their families.

To be on the receiving end of Lilian's friendship encompassed loyalty, encouragement, support, and energy. She had lifelong friends from every place she lived and from every group she belonged.

To have Lilian's life meant to have a great life!

The family would like to extend a special thanks to the caretakers from Synergy Homecare, especially Doris Acheampong, Isha Songu Mbriwa and Aminata Ly; Jansen Russ and Lenee Essig from Capital Caring Hospice; Dr. Matt Irwin and Patricia Adams NP; and the continued support of Rev. Barbara Heck and Bush Hill Presbyterian Church.

In lieu of flowers, please consider making a contribution in Lilian's name to:

Lilian's Lift

C/O Bush Hill Presbyterian Church

4916 Franconia Road

Alexandria, VA 22310

Comments



“ Our thoughts and prayers are with your family. We will all miss Lilian... Bless you all,
Members of Henry Clay Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution.

November 04, 2018 at 12:00 AM