



Mary Elizabeth Merris

November 1, 1929 - September 30, 2018

Mary Elizabeth Bentley Merris, 88, died Sunday, Sept. 30, 2018, at her home in South Jacksonville. She was the loving wife of Robert and mother of Michael, Kathleen, Gregory, Mary Helen and Eric.

Mary was born, Nov. 1, 1929, in Jacksonville, the daughter of Eugene and Mary Galloway Bentley. She grew up in Jacksonville, attending Our Savior elementary and Routt high schools.

She married Robert Merris in Our Savior church in Jacksonville, Feb. 20, 1950.

Five children survive: Michael R. Merris of San Francisco, CA, Kathleen D. McNeely (Joel) of Jacksonville, Gregory A. Merris (Cindy) of San Diego, CA, Mary Helen Hogan (Patrick) of Eagan, MN, and Eric E. Merris (Susan) of Kansas City, MO.

Also surviving are five grandchildren: Jonah and Aidan Merris of Oakland, CA, Jennifer Carr (Jeff) and Aaron Merris of San Diego, CA, and Abigail Hogan of Eagan, MN. A much-loved little great granddaughter, Sophia Carr, of San Diego, CA, also survives.

Mary leaves a sister, Gloria Bentley Standley of Jacksonville and a brother, James Bentley of Chicago. Also, she leaves sister-in-law and girlhood friend,

Patricia Horton Bentley of Chicago. Many nieces and nephews of the Standley family in Jacksonville and the Bentley family in Chicago survive.

In the early years of her marriage, Mary was kept busy raising five children and restoring and redecorating the eight homes that the family lived in during cross-country travels.

Mary took the responsibility of purchasing and maintaining the Merris homes first in Jacksonville—a Penza house when her husband was a student at Illinois College—then in Decatur, IL; Yonkers, White Plains and Middletown, New York; the family farm home near Bluffs; and, at last, the Merris residence for 25 years in South Jacksonville.

While in New York, Mary became interested in Molas, an art form developed by the natives of San Blas Island off the coast of South America. Images of jungle and ocean animal lives are created by stitching several overlays of cut out colorful cloth.

Merris homes have displayed up to a dozen of these framed images on the walls. Mary gave many Molas to her children, along with her hand stitched quilts.

Mary worked in banking in New York. When the family returned to Illinois and lived on the family farm, she listed herself as a “farmer”, maintaining a herd of cattle, a huge vegetable and flower garden, fruit trees, and sometimes caring for chickens, hogs, and sheep.

Back in Illinois, Mary renewed her association with a small group of women she had known during her Routt years. The “girls” met informally and occasionally for lunch and afternoon day trips around the area. The “girls” now are mostly all gone.

The Merris family wishes to thank a special group of persons who provided care and aid in the latter days: Judy Montgomery, devoted friend and helper who has been with Mary for the past five years, keeping the household

running with peak efficiency; Carol Stults, nurse and neighbor who was one step-across-the-driveway call for everything from providing help with falls in the night to professional guidance and counseling; Jacksonville alderwoman, Lori and husband, Mike Oldenettel, who give new meaning to “good neighbors”, have been just across the street when age-related emergencies have occurred with both Merrises.

Also, the family is grateful for the last-days comfort and care provided by doctors, nurses and aides of the Great Lakes Hospice organization and Amanda and her staff of the Jacksonville based Home Instead group.

Private graveside services are to be held at Green Cemetery in Bluffs. Daws Family Funeral Home in South Jacksonville is overseeing the services.

Tribute Wall



“ *Mary Elizabeth Merris*

January 28, 2023 at 11:11 AM



“ *I was so sorry to read of Mary's death; I remember so well all the trips us "girls from Routt" took, the lunches, shopping and just plain laughter and talks (lots of talk!). I am sorry that I did not keep in closer touch than I have with Mary. I saw her and Bob at a restaurant and did stop and visit for a minute. Bob I am so sorry for your lost of Mary, I will keep you in my prayers. May she rest in peace. An "old" friend. Katie Sorrells*

Katie Sorrells - October 02, 2018 at 12:28 PM