

RUTH S. MAXSON – TRIBUTES and REMEMBRANCES

Marcy (D&H friend from Philadelphia):

I was expecting this news. It is wonderful that you were able to be with her over the last few months and have your brothers available and helpful.

She lived quite a life. She clearly left an impressive number of children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Bob and I will look forward to joining you and David at the memorial.

Enjoy the sun and warmth until then.

Love to you,
Marcy

Jeremy Smith, friend and former Special Collections Librarian for Oberlin's Music Conservatory:

I am so very sorry to hear this news. You'll be heavy on our hearts as you grieve this loss in the days and weeks ahead.

Wishing you much comfort, joyful memories, and cleansing tears.
Jeremy

Alisa (Jeremy's wife):

I am so sorry to hear this. I know this is so hard.

Ruth was a very special soul no doubt. I am certain her last days were filled with much love. What a gift.

We are sending love and hugs to you as you mourn your sweet mom.

Love,
Alisa

Laura Biersmith, Philanthropy Officer, lbiersmith@mote.org:

I am deeply saddened to learn of Ruth's passing but I am also very grateful for having known such an amazing and remarkable lady. Ruth was smart, caring, funny, giving, and she loved her family with a tremendous sense of devotion.

I send my heartfelt sympathies to you, David and your entire family, and thank you for writing to me and letting me know.

With my warmest regards,
Laura

Jan Prager, friend & neighbor in New York:

I am so very sorry, Holly.

Your mom's legacy of love, kindness and cutthroat Cribbage continues in you.

Wishing you and your brothers happy memories.

Much love,
Jan

Debbie Hess Norris, Director, Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation:

Oh, Holly.... I am so very sorry. Your mom was remarkable ... just like her beloved daughter. 13 great-grandchildren! Wow. Sending you so much strength. Can you let me know when the memorial service is? Love to you always, Debbie

Karen Holmes, D&H friend from California:

I am so sorry to hear that she went on her way. She was an astonishing woman, so strong, so self-directed and so lovable. I remember her well from the times we met her at her home. You took such good care of her yourself. You were her loving daughter and fierce advocate! I hope that you are comforted by the loving care you gave. Her strength and kindness will shine forever through you.

Sending you much love,
Karen

Eileen Shapiro – former development director at the Mercer Museum, in charge of volunteers:

My thoughts are with you and your family at this difficult time. Ruth was such a dear person and I'm honored to have been part of her life.

How wonderful that you were able to spend a lot of time with her at the end. She always glowed while sharing stories of you and your siblings, her grandchildren, and great grandchildren. I'm sure you know how much she loved all of you.

Cory and I look forward to celebrating her remarkable life with you in the spring.

With heartfelt condolences,
Eileen

Trish, RN, instrumental in keeping Mother at home as long as possible, and with her to the end:

Your mother is alive and well and her kindness lives on in all of you. ❤️

I miss her every day. She was such a daily part of my routine, but I know she's looking over all of us smiling down on everyone 😊

Pastor Keith, Upper Dublin Lutheran Church:

Thank you for letting me know. A life very well lived and now she is whole and well with her God. You and your family are in our hearts and prayers. I know we will be in touch about arrangements. For now, sending you much peace.

Tinky:

I'm so glad I was able to have a conversation with her on Friday. Everyone knew this was inevitable, of course, but when the moment comes, it is still a shock, somehow. Ruth clearly passed to the next world with the same grace with which she lived in this one. Now it's up to us to embrace her new life within our hearts, leading us by example, as she always did. I send my deepest condolences to all of you, and am so happy I'll see you in the spring. With so much love, Tinky

Jon vanIngen, childhood friend of all, and son of Charlotte, Mother's high school classmate:

In 1961, this coming Thursday, January 22nd, a huge snowstorm was underway in Hartsville, Pennsylvania. Close friend and neighbor Ruth Maxson stood at the ready with her Red Cross handbook prepared to assist my mother with the birth of her fourth child at home. Instead, my dad decided to load himself, my mother, and my unborn sister into his 2 door Corvair and plow through a 4 foot snow drift on Creek Rd on their way to Abington hospital. Fortunately for all involved they made it safely but it was always good to have dedicated, lifelong friends close by.

Your mother (Ruthie as my mom called her) was a great lady and I'm proud to have known her. I'm very sorry to see her go. She is proof that the good don't always die young.

I'm glad you all got to spend time with her at the end.

Lianne:

The world paused yesterday to take a sigh. Mother was able to leave as she wanted to. Stubbornly in charge of her situation with grace and dignity. So thankful we all got to see her and help in small ways. She has been a true matriarch as witnessed by her dedication to her family! Her legacy is far reaching and beautiful. We are thankful for all of the memories that are safely within us.

Sending love to all of you.

Carolina, Nicholas's wife:

Hey my dear Peter! I wanted to give you the warmest hug in the world. We love you very much. I wish I had met your wonderful mom. I loved the stories you, Leona and Nicholas shared about her to me. Her positiveness was and still IS very inspiring to me. What a beautiful message you sent to us all. It was one of the most beautiful things I ever read. With all my heart, I wish you feel comfort with your loved relatives, brothers and sister in this moment. I will be giving you many hugs very soon, much love.

Jamie Monat, Peter's college roommate:

I am overcome by a wave of sorrow. I've known Ruth for most of my life, and she was one of the last vestiges of my parents' generation; it seems that now all ties to that generation are gone, and we are exposed. I remember many things about her:

- her lack of complaint when I inadvertently used foul language during our sophomore year in Foulke, and didn't realize that she was standing just outside the door
- the way she did not treat your kids as kids, but as adults, especially evident one time when you were all visiting here in Stow
- her glee at her stock market investments and how they were ballooning in value
- her sincere appreciation for a small blue glass bowl that I gave her ~10 years ago
- Her love of watching golf on TV and of Tiger Woods in particular
- her attitude towards health and death. I remember her telling me that she did not worry about the things that she could not change. I think her exact quote was, "Well, there's nothing I can do about it, so I just don't worry about it."

I know that she lived to be 100 and that her death was anticipated, but it still stinks when it finally happens. I have always envied you and Scott for the longevity of your moms. For me, the pain of my mom's death never really fully dissipated, but I have learned to live with it (like a disability) and managed to fully enjoy life, even without her. I hope it will be the same for you.

Sincere love and condolences to you and the entire family; I will miss her.

Scott Williamson, Peter's college roommate:

I am so very sorry. I know how you and your siblings loved her so much. There is so much warmth in your recounting of the last few weeks. The memories of the house where you grew up. Your Mom's last hugs.

You are so fortunate to have had a loving mother with whom you remained close for all these years. You and she are also fortunate that she was able to enjoy her very long life until the very end.

Very glad you and your family are dealing with it as well as it sounds like you are. With love to you and your family.

Bill Walton, oarsman:

Always sad, and never easy, but what a special woman who lived a great life and positively impacted so many. Hang in there.

Art Oller, oarsman:

Your home being the closest to campus meant your Mom would be visited by your Princeton teammates and roommates sooner or later. I remember visiting and getting a very warm welcome from your Mom, as if I was family. So, I certainly felt I was. It must have been special for you to grow up with a mom so warmly accepting your friends, teammates, etc. She was a great lady. Thanks for letting us know about her passing. A sad time for sure. And great of you to be there for her in her final days. God bless.

Karen Langley, Director, Volunteer Services, Doylestown Health:

Thank you so much for sharing this information with us in the Volunteer Office. I forwarded the email to the Accounting Department – your mother has more than a few friends there! She was an amazing woman who gave so much to the hospital in different ways – from her time on the board to her many, many hours in accounting helping them in many ways, she truly made a difference. And Ruth was always able to make me laugh in her very sweet, no-nonsense way. When we celebrated her 100th birthday here at the hospital, it was a magical day for all of us.

Thanks to you and the entire family for sharing your mother with us for so many years. I hope your grief is lightened just a bit to know that she loved all of you deeply and completely and shared stories of you with all of us. I call that a life well-lived.

Meadowlark Bakery & Café:

Would you be opposed if [we] mentioned her passing on our Facebook page? I know a lot of customers loved her as [well] as all of our staff.

Lori (van Ingen) and John Daukas, daughter of Charlotte, Mother's high school classmate:

My condolences for the loss of your mom. That's a hard journey.

Ruth's passing marked the end of an era, for sure. Her independent spirit and zest for life were an inspiration to me. John and I will be honored to gather with you all to celebrate her.

Many thanks for reaching out,
Lori

Craig, at the memorial service:

Thank you for being here to honor our mother. We decided that we would each convey brief remembrances that we have of her which made her very special to us, and to those who knew her. I am Craig, the youngest of our five siblings although my brothers and sister insist that I am adopted! I'll start and we'll go in reverse order, ...because I said so.

In the book, "When Ghosts Speak", Mary Ann Winkowski wrote that the spirit of the person often attends their own funeral service. Before mom passed, I asked her if we could hold a memorial service for her. She said that it would be fine under two conditions.

First, that no one would feel compelled to travel and second, we would not go into too much trouble. Mommy, if you are listening, I believe that we have failed on both accounts.

Her guidance to us in this way honors her legacy and is just one more example of her outward focus toward others. Her whole life was one of service, usually working in the background with no need or desire for recognition.

Mommy, I hope you forgive us for honoring you today in this way. All of us present have been touched deeply by you and are here to show you their immense love and respect.

You have touched each of us in different ways. With that, I'll hand things over to Glen.

Glen, at the memorial service:

"It's 1972. I'm 17 and it's summer break between my junior and senior years in high school. And being the adventurous kid I was then, I thought I could make it to the west coast and back before school resumed in the fall, on a motorcycle. My parents weren't thrilled, but off I went.

Upon my safe return home ten weeks later, I was told in no uncertain terms that it was not OK to not call every once in a while to let Mom know that I was safe. The trip was great, but the most important lesson I learned that summer was that I had caused needless worry for my Mom by not calling (in this case for about 2 weeks).

Mother often gave us the space to do things that today might seem a bit 'unconventional' (like shooting machine guns in the quarry with the local police or riding my bicycle to Kentucky before ROTC training camp, for example), but she always cared and wanted to know we were OK, and most certainly wanted to share in our many adventures.

We never doubted our Mom's love for each of us in equal measure as there were no favorites in this family."

Holly, at the memorial service:

I spoke with Mother every evening – usually around 10:30 at night. She like to watch the Voice, Jeopardy, Wheel of Fortune, and Shark Tank – shows where everyone had a chance to improve their circumstances. I made sure to embellish our daily events in an entertaining way – she enjoyed hearing about my life in its minutiae – and it became exciting for me to share my daily life with her.

Mother was an Ardent Eagles and Phillies fan, watched golf and tennis, was an astute and competitive Cribbage player. When we encouraged her to stop driving

at the age of 99, it wasn't because she wasn't capable, but because we knew the insurance company would question OUR sanity!

When she chose to dine alone with a crossword puzzle at her side, she radiated so much goodness that complete strangers would often pay for her meal before she had the chance to ask for the check.

She was a very good listener, as many of you know. Of course she had opinions, and she would express them if necessary, but most likely, her counsel would remain unspoken, because just by talking with her, you would come to realize the best course of action on your own.

She was an example of grace in action and her inherent kindness shone through everything she did. She was authentic and honest. She raised the five of us to be authentic and honest.

But what I looked forward to each evening, more than anything else, was her initial question, "Was it a good day?" And because I was speaking with her, it always was.

Peter, at the memorial service:

Like Craig, I also called her Mommy. Maybe that sounds a bit immature, but that's the way it always was, and she was fine with that. Besides, I was clearly her favorite child so I could get away with it.

There are times in our lives when someone does something you don't like and you just want to say what you really think. But already when we were fairly young, Mommy told us, as her mother had told her, "If you can't say something nice about someone, it's better to say nothing at all."

If you think about that for a moment, first, it's not an easy thing to do. And second, if you are somehow able to get yourself into that frame of mind, you can more easily excuse or overlook other people's faults and instead focus on the good in people. Almost everyone has far more good than bad inside, and we simply need to make an effort to find it.

That's how Mommy lived her life. She was always able to overlook the bad and appreciate the good in others. And as everyone who knew her is aware, we were much the better for her ability to do that.

We all have good and not-so-good days, right? But she never had a bad day! Or if she did, you would never know it.

Wayne, at the memorial service:

Her car was a turbocharged Subaru Forester. She was clocked at 70 mph between her driveway and her favorite bakery a quarter mile up Old York Road. The officer was apparently so transfixed by the centenarian with the vest, cartouche, and disarming smile that, to the dismay of her children, she drove off without even a warning, as if time itself had waved her through.

Over the past 27 years since Mom lost her beloved Bill, the flame that lit that smile burned bright because of each of you, a fire fanned by her daughter on the phone each evening, by Pat Sejak and Alex Trebek, by her sons who crossed the continent and the ocean to care for her, by strangers at DaddyPops and Outback who treated her to meals, by Tiger Woods, by a son who organized and sustained weekly family Zooms with Mom at the start of Covid that pierced her isolation and linked us all, by neighbors old and new, by young men who fed the birds and older men who mulched her flowers and deer who munched her tulips, by nurses and their husbands with gentle arms and gentler hearts, by kayakers and cleaners, and by so many others who kept her light alive. Thank you to all.

Harry Degnan, neighbor and son of Dr. Tina Degnan:

Dear Maxson Family,

H.N.D.

I want to thank you for your generous gift. Aunt Ruth was amazing in so many ways, and I will forever be grateful for the opportunity she gave me to learn independence. Throughout middle and high school, the work she gave me taught me the value of a dollar and allowed me to have some fun with a bit of spending money. As I enter the next chapter of my life away from home, your and your mother's generous gift will continue to help me foster this independence.

Our little corner of Hartsville will always feel a bit dimmer without Aunt Ruth. Filling the bird feeder and being greeted with her warm smile and a friendly wave through the big window was

always a highlight of my day. I will miss being waved in during the Christmas season and being gifted a warm hug and a beautiful Poinsettia. With the gift you all have given me, I hope to better embody the kindness and love Aunt Ruth always bestowed upon me.

In Friendship,
Harry Degnan

Elliot Degnan, neighbor and son of Dr. Tina Degnan:



April 27th, 2026

Dear Maxson Family,

It is very special to me to be remembered by Aunt Ruth. I will always think of her and miss her. I have put the money in my savings account and to use some of it to learn how to make investments. But some I will just save, because as Aunt Ruth would say, "Don't bet money you don't have!"

with love,

Elliot

Samantha Berger, artist and author, daughter of David, step-daughter of Holly:

MRS. ALFRED BERGER 30 EAST 62ND STREET NEW YORK, N. Y. 10021

Holly & Glen

How beautiful and so very Grandma Ruth, the person who always had a kind word for everyone, would leave behind such a kind gesture for her many grandchildren. This is so meaningful and lovely. Thank you both for carrying on the kindness. Samantha