



Dr. Delpha B. Keys

November 24, 1925 - March 18, 2016

SOUTH HADLEY – A Tribute to Delpha Keys. Delpha Bostock Keys was born on her father's farm in Blue Hill, Nebraska on November 24, 1925. When she was 4 years old she moved with her mother Leila Parker Bostock and her younger brother Lynn Bostock to her grandparents' small farm in Guide Rock, Nebraska. Her grandmother Alma Peters Parker was the owner/operator of the local telephone exchange. At 4 and a half years old Delpha learned to operate the party-line switchboard located in the family room in the middle of the farmhouse. The family survived a period of drought, intense heat, tornadoes, and dust storms during the Great Depression but in 1934 they moved to Southern California when Delpha was 8 years old. They boarded a train during a blinding dust storm almost losing her brother Lynn in the process. The family settled in Lomita, California where they ran a small grocery store. Delpha was now called "Del" by her many school friends. After earning a full year's scholarship to the University of California at Berkley in 1942 she worked for a year at the U.S. Navy Bureau of Shipping to earn money for school clothes. During the summer of 1944 she worked for the Northrop Aircraft Company as "Rosie the Riveter" helping to build the P61 Black Widow night-fighter used in WWII in the Pacific. In 1946 Del married her high school sweetheart Arthur Halverson Keys, an ensign in the merchant marines. She gave birth to a daughter Susan Adele Keys in 1947. She continued her college education at Long Beach State College where she earned her BA degree in Education. In 1954 Art and Del and Susan moved to

Madison, NJ. Del taught in the Madison public schools for 18 years. After Susan became enrolled at Wellesley College, Del won a fellowship to the doctoral program in Early Childhood Education at Columbia University in New York. In 1975 she earned her Doctorate in Early Childhood Education and went on to teach at New York State University at New Paltz and then the College of William and Mary in Virginia. From there she moved to Silver Spring, Maryland to work as the Coordinator of Early Childhood Education for the Montgomery County school system. After retirement Art and Del moved to Delaware and traveled extensively. Art died in 2005 after a long illness and Del moved to Loomis Village in South Hadley, Massachusetts in 2010. There she was affectionately known as "Doctor Del". Del passed away on March 18, 2016 at the Center for Extended Care in Amherst, MA. She leaves her daughter Susan and Susan's life partner Suzanne Kramer and their dog Leonard. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Cooley Dickinson VNA and Hospice in Northampton, MA. New England Funeral & Cremation Center, LLC 25 Mill Street, Springfield, MA has been entrusted with the arrangements. Visit www.nefcc.net We invite you to send a message of condolence to the Keys family at www.nefcc.net

Tribute Wall

JB

“ Susan, your mother was well-traveled over the landscape of this country, as well as through its history. I love that she was a Rosie the Riveter! Education was a valued part of her life, and, clearly, she passed that on to you. I feel lucky to have met her. Be well, and see you soon! Love, Jeff.

Jeffrey Beaulieu - February 14, 2023 at 10:19 AM

JB

“ The best Girl Scout leader ever. Compassionate. Let me get a GS Horsewoman badge on an overgrown pony at St. E's dairy farm! I had to "explain" how to put on a saddle! But she knew how important it was. Thank you Mrs. Keys..

Jacqueline Drutok Bell - February 14, 2023 at 10:19 AM