



Lorna R. Yphantis

December 12, 1930 - January 26, 2019

Lorna Ruth Yphantis of Springfield, MA died peacefully at home on January 26, 2019. She was 88 years old.

Lorna was born in East Boston, MA, on December 10, 1930, the daughter of John Ashton Nickerson and Mildred Carter Nickerson. She attended East Boston public schools and Boston Latin School, before graduating from East Boston High School, where she was a cheerleader and a basketball player. She spent her childhood summers in Parker Head, ME, and throughout her life she would immediately name Popham Beach as her favorite place.

While still in her teens, Lorna trained as a nurse at New England Baptist Hospital but contracted tuberculosis on the job and spent the better parts of 1950-1952 in a sanatorium. After her recovery, she was a champion for physical fitness and either swam or skated almost every day; she also taught figure skating classes for young children. As late as 2001, Lorna swam in the Senior Olympics in Springfield and won a first place medal.

During her time in the sanatorium, she had a faithful visitor, David Andrew Yphantis, a young biologist then studying at Harvard University, who came to see her every day. According to family legend, the two met at a Sunday school picnic when they were both 12 years old: Lorna had teased David because he

brought his lunch in a briefcase and he replied by hitting her with a slide rule. The two were married on June 4, 1953 soon after Lorna was released from the sanatorium.

They adored and championed their five children -- Sandra, Peter (who died in 1989), Susan, Kim and Diana. The family moved often -- from Cambridge, MA to Downers Grove, IL, to Scarsdale, NY, to Glen Rock, N.J., to the Buffalo area before settling in Storrs, CT in 1967 where David took a professorship in Molecular and Cell Biology. The family summered in Woods Hole for several years in the 60's and 70's. From 1987 until 2009 the family would spend half of every year in Crete, building their beloved home in the village of Stamnoi, where they made close friends with both locals and expatriates.

Lorna devoted most of her early adult life to raising the children and later began a career as a laboratory assistant at the University of Connecticut. She worked there from the mid-1970s until both David and Lorna retired from UCONN and moved to Springfield in 2001.

Lorna was expansive and generous- a warm and compassionate woman who lived for her family, her friends and her dogs. She was smart and sassy with a passion for movement and dance, and any kind of game. She had a gift for friendship, and her friends were deeply devoted to her. She was a humanitarian and concerned herself with the welfare of individuals and the state of the world. A social activist all her life, she marched in protests against the Vietnam War and the Ku Klux Klan and spoke out against corruption and cruelty wherever and whenever she found it.

She is survived by her husband, David and her daughters, Sandra Records of Westfield, MA, Susan Edwards of Springfield, MA, Kim Yphantis of Springfield, MA, and Diana Butler of Ashford, CT, and her ten grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. She is also survived by her older brother, the Reverend

J. Ashton Nickerson of Saco, ME.

A memorial service will be held at the Alumni Center at the University of Connecticut in Storrs, on Sunday March 24 at 2 P.M. In lieu of flowers, please send donations to the American Civil Liberties Union. New England Funeral & Cremation Center, LLC, 25 Mill Street, Springfield, MA is assisting the family. Please visit www.nefcc.net

Tribute Wall

MJ

“ *In a very real sense Lorna was a mother to me and Dave a father.* ”

Michael Johnson - February 14, 2023 at 10:09 AM