

Harriet R. (Hoppert) Stickney

Harriet R. (Hoppert) Stickney passed from this life on Tuesday, April 12, 2011, at Alexian Village in Milwaukee WI from complications of pneumonia. She was born in Sheboygan on June 20, 1925, to Martin J. and Hanna (Proehl) Hoppert. She married Alfred F. Stickney in Milwaukee on July 1, 1967, and moved to San Bruno CA where the couple lived for 31 years before moving to Alexian Village in 1998. Her husband preceded her in death on July 15, 2003.

Harriet graduated from Sheboygan Central High School in 1943 and went on to receive her teaching degree from Sheboygan County Normal School and bachelor's and master's degrees in education from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Harriet is fondly remembered as “Spud” by many Girl Scouts who attended Camp Evelyn Heronymus. Because of her love of being a Girl Scout leader and camp counselor, her step-mother Leona encouraged Harriet to pursue a career in education. She was originally declined admittance to Sheboygan County Normal School because of her short stature but her persistence won out. She proved doubters wrong by graduating at the top of her class. She taught 3rd and 4th grades at Mapledale School in Sheboygan for 8 years before moving to Milwaukee to teach 4th and 5th grades at Browning School. Her unique ability to see eye-to-eye with her students contributed to her success as a highly regarded teacher. She had a firm yet creative and loving way of dealing with her students

While she lived in Sheboygan she was active in Business and Professional Women (BPW), taught Sunday School at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, presented many travelogues of her 5-week European trip in 1958 and entertained with comedic monologues. She was also known locally for her children’s radio program, “Miss Harriet,” broadcast on WHBL which introduced children to music, literature, poetry and storytelling. In 1959 she was the recipient of the Carol Award for achievement and recognition for outstanding leadership by the Junior Chamber of Commerce in Wisconsin. In San Bruno she was an active member of St. Andrews Episcopal Church where she served in various leadership capacities, taught Sunday school and was a member of the handbell choir. She was also an active member of AARP, WREA and SCARTA

What might have appeared as a handicap to others became the defining direction of her life’s work. The blessing of short stature provided the focus to her mission in life: to use her many skills as counselor, educator and public speaker to improve life for others of short stature. She and her husband Al were exceptional leaders in the Little People of America organization regionally, nationally and internationally. They were the foundation of the San Francisco Bay Area Chapter of LPA and instrumental in the development of LPA overall. In 1989 she and her husband were awarded honorary life memberships in LPA, and she received numerous distinguished service awards for her contributions to LPA, including the Lee Kitchens Meritorious Service Award in 2004. Harriet went to great lengths to meet with parents of newborn short stature babies to allay their fears about their child’s future. She worked with Little Littles, teen and parent

groups. She spoke to classrooms to educate children about short stature people, lectured at medical schools regarding the reality of living with short stature and served on the Johns Hopkins Hospital medical advisory board. Harriet's opinion was frequently sought by authors of articles and books about LPs (Little People), and she spent hours on the phone with reporters, parents, adult LPs and many others looking for more information. In the words of a parent of a short stature child, "Harriet's special job was to love, give hope, guidance, and confidence to the young, give advice and understanding to the parents, and knowledge to the medical field." Harriet and Al were friends, advocates, and to many, their "LP parents."

In addition to her husband, she was preceded in death by her parents, mother and father-in-law Col. Richard C. and Pearl Stickney, step-mother Leona (Kilborn) Hoppert, brother and sister-in-law Frederic M. and Violet Hoppert, brother and sister-in-law Martin H. and Edyth Hoppert, sister Kathryn Beihoffer, brothers-in-law Richard C. Stickney, Jr. and Robert Reno, grandnephew Nathan Hoppert, and her beloved dog Mops. She is survived by brother-in-law Dale Beihoffer, brother and sister-in-law John and Sharon Hoppert, sister and brother-in-law Ann and James Keller, and sister-in-law Marion (Stickney) Reno; fourteen nieces and nephews : Frederic (Beverly) Hoppert, Jr., David Hoppert Sr., Dr. Jonathan (Karen) Hoppert, Phil (Mary Ellen) Hoppert, Christianne Poppert, Mardyth (Bill) Pollard, Laurie (Curt) Joa, Rev. James (Abby) Hoppert, Mark Hoppert, Mary (Dan) Swanson, and Anne Beihoffer, Robert (Nancy) Reno, Richard Reno and Rebecca Reno; 23 great nieces and nephews; and nine great-great nieces and nephews. Other close relatives and many friends across the US and world wide were blessed to have known her.

A memorial service will be held Saturday, April 30, at 1:30 p.m. in the Chapel at Alexian Village, 9301 North 76th Street, Milwaukee, with visitation beginning at 12:30 p.m. Officiants will be Rev. James Hoppert, Harriet's nephew, and Rev. Jessi Smedal, chaplain at Alexian Village. Her body has been donated to the Medical College of Wisconsin. Memorials may be directed to Little People of America (lpaonline.org); St. Andrews Episcopal Church, San Bruno CA; Bethesda Lutheran Home, Watertown WI; Alexian Village Scholarship Fund (9301 N 76th Street, Milwaukee WI 53223); or the charity of your choice. Online condolences may be forwarded to jrkahk@att.net or posted on the LPA Facebook page.

Harriet will always be remembered for her wit and intelligence, great sense of humor, love of gardening, nature and animals, music and reading, and dedication to church, family and friends. She was a small person who made a giant impact on the lives of so many and will leave an immense void with her passing.