



Suzanne R. McKay

March 19, 1923 - February 8, 2016

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1923 - 2016

In the early hours of February 8th, Suzanne McKay passed peacefully into rest after 92 years of love, laughter, family, and friends. Born to George Tait and Gertrude Borgrink Tait in 1923 in Whitehall, Montana, Suzanne enjoyed her youth in rural America, making mischief with her two sisters Jeannette and Nancy. As a child Suzanne was an early entrepreneur, holding backyard circuses for the neighborhood. She also worked as a teen usher in the local movie theatre and learned of life beyond Whitehall both in school, and on the silver screen. She carried those lessons of trust, kindness to others, and an eye to the big picture all her life.

Coinciding with the beginning of WWII, Suzanne attended Montana State College in Bozeman, MT, cutting short her studies to take employment at Malmstrom Air Force Base in Great Falls, Mt. There she met the love of her life, Albert "Mac" McKay, a handsome Air Force officer. They married, and traveled to assignments in Texas, Japan, New York and Arlington, VA. among other postings. They grew their family to include their children William, Jeanne and Alan. In 1965, Mac retired from the Air Force and they settled in Santa Barbara, which they enjoyed from the first day and also the company of Mac's sister Eleanor Van Cott, who had encouraged them to move to this lovely city.

As a mother and a woman in the workforce, Suzanne shared her sense of social justice and compassion with all who knew her. She loved a good book, Masterpiece Theatre, and a challenging crossword puzzle. She and Mac traveled to Scotland to retrace family roots, and to experience the Edinburgh Festival. Suzanne always made sure her children were safe, had a treat in their lunch bag to take to school, and felt her nurturing support through good and bad times in life. Her guiding principle was fairness, in politics, in community and in life.

After Mac's passing in 1992, Suzanne focused on church, literature, family and cherished

friends. She lived her final years in the company of her daughter Jeanne, with visits from William and Alan for family dinners and events. She enjoyed her "Birthday Club" lady friends who would rendezvous for lunch with much laughter sprinkled into the conversation. To the end, Suzanne thought mainly of others, wanting all who knew her to feel her love and support.

Suzanne is survived by her three children, William, Jeanne, Alan and his wife Maggie, and her grandchildren Nicholas McKay (Caroline) and Carolee McKay (and her fiancé Ryan Trimberger).

She is also survived by her sister Nancy Jones in Butte, Mt., and Nancy's daughters Suzie Costic (daughters Alexandra, Katie, and Natalie), Kate Jones, and Kristen Gratalo (husband Michael, son Dominick and daughter Anna); her sister Jeannette's daughters Ellen Irion (husband Dave, and daughters Alexis and Julia), and Lesley Hiatt (son Justin). Her sister-in-law Eleanor Van Cott also survives her.

The McKay family wishes to thank Dr. Alexandra Rogers, Dr. Avery Wilmanns, the doctors and staff at Cottage Hospital and the wonderful, caring support offered by Serenity House. Their kindnesses made Suzanne's passing a gentle one.

At her request, there will be a family gathering in Whitehall in the summer where she will join her parents and extended family in their final resting place. For those interested, donations in remembrance of Suzanne are suggested at Pathpoint, 315 West Haley Street, Suite 102, Santa Barbara, CA 93101.