



Elaine Parkey

November 5, 1921 - November 15, 2017

Longtime Santa Barbara resident, Elaine Parkey, passed away November 15, 2017. She is in Heaven with her husband and probably playing the piano for Jesus. She had 96 very full years as a musician, florist, teacher, wife and friend. Elaine was born to Lydia and James Heckman in Selma, California on November 5, 1921. Her mother was a vocal soloist and started Elaine on piano lessons very early. She graduated with a teaching degree from Fresno State, taught for one year and, in 1944, went to USC to get her masters in music. After earning her degree, Elaine went back to teaching underprivileged middle school students in Watts where she formed a very successful girls' glee club. She was also an accompanist for the Los Angeles Youth Concert Singers which became the Roger Wagner Chorale. In 1950 she met Charles Parkey at First Baptist Church in Los Angeles and they were married in 1952. Charles was a tool and die maker but in April 1958, they purchased Gleave's Flower Shop in Santa Barbara which they happily ran together for nearly 40 years. After 55 years of marriage, Charles passed away on December 21, 2007.

While living in LA and working as an accompanist, Elaine met a young starlet, Maureen O' Hara. She became her life-long friend and accompanist, traveling with Maureen to New York where they performed on the Perry Como show, Andy Williams show, Tennessee Ernie Ford show, Ed Sullivan Show and many USO tours abroad to entertain the troops. Elaine had the honor to sit

with Maureen in 2015 as the movie star received an honorary OSCAR award.

Elaine was choir director at Veronica Springs Church (First Baptist Church of Santa Barbara) for over 25 years. She loved the Lord, was always full of joy, loved people and treated everyone as a friend. She continued to praise God until the end for his many blessings and was able to celebrate her 96th birthday with many of her friends before she died. Her extended family and friends will deeply miss this remarkable woman. A celebration of her life will be held on Saturday January 6th at 2:30 with a light reception from 3:30 to 5:00 at Veronica Springs Church, 949 Veronica Springs Rd, Santa Barbara, CA.