



Elizabeth "Betty" Harris

July 9, 1927 - October 19, 2016

Betty Harris, age 89, peacefully passed away on October 19, 2016 in Santa Barbara due to complications from heart failure. Betty grew up in Columbus, Ohio where she enjoyed extended family, friends and church youth activities. Betty was a serious student, graduating as valedictorian of her large high school in Columbus. She met her first husband, Merle W. Howson, Jr. and they married in December, 1945. They and their ensuing children, Paul, Steve, and Beth moved to Dallas, Texas in 1953. However, after her husband Merle died in 1961, Betty moved her little family to Santa Barbara in 1964. Betty soon secured a position with UCSB Extension where she enjoyed an amazing career. UCSB Administrators, noting her keen business mind and personable manner, promoted her to program a variety of Extension's course offerings. Betty later created and developed the highly successful English as a Second Language Program and was Director until her retirement in 1989. In advancing the outreach of this program she traveled extensively to all parts of the world while enjoying the support of her wonderful staff at UCSB.

Betty met her husband, Jack, at UCSB Extension, whom she married in 1971. They shared a wonderful and adventurous life together for 45 years until her death.

Betty loved to collect Southwestern art and jewelry, travel, attend plays and Indian Pow Wows, visit museums, enjoyed cooking and gardening, and was

an avid reader. She liked Sheryl Crow, mojitos and good food. She met the challenges of being shipwrecked on Santa Cruz island in the 1970's and losing her home in the 1978 Sycamore Canyon fire with aplomb and dignity. Her response to questions on how she managed to get through her life's challenges was typically pragmatic, honest, and said with a smile "Well, I just did what I had to do."

Betty helped bring Hospice to Santa Barbara many years ago, volunteered with the Santa Barbara Suicide Hotline. and served on the board of the Transition House Auxiliary for many years. She was deeply interested in the education of Native American children and supported a number of Indian schools.

Above all else, Betty loved her family. She was deeply interested in each family member's life, was a caring listener, fair-minded, and a wonderful counselor. She was conversant on many subjects, had a great sense of humor, and was generous beyond measure.

Betty primarily targeted her generosity within the family to three "E's" - Education, Entertainment, and Emergencies. She encouraged education by assisting each of her children and grand-children to go to college, if they so chose. She encouraged family togetherness in family vacations. And all of her family knew that if they had a true emergency, she was there to help and support.

Betty was a beautiful and true Lady. She was an amazing role model. Her legacy will live on through her children, grandchildren and great-grand children.

Betty is survived by her husband, Jack Harris, her children: Paul (Kristi) Howson, Steve (Earline) Howson, Beth Howson (Dan) Oates and step-

children Paul (Stefan) Harris and Elliot (Tina) Harris; nephew: Bill Dietz; cousin: Julie Miller; grandchildren: Jeremy, Julianne, Sarah, Melissa, John, Matthew, TJ (Taylor), Madison and six great-grandchildren. Betty was predeceased by her mother Elizabeth Johnson, father Thomas Johnson, sister Carolyn Pipe and by her first husband, Merle W. Howson Jr.

All are welcome to attend the service at 2:00 pm on Friday, November 18, 2016 at the Santa Barbara Cemetery. A Celebration of Betty's Life will follow at 3:00 pm at the Santa Barbara Yacht Club located at 130 Harbor Way.

Cemetery Details

Santa Barbara Cemetery

901 Channel Drive
Santa Barbara, CA 93108
(805) 969-3231

Previous Events

Graveside Service

NOV 18. 2:00 PM (PT)

Santa Barbara Cemetery
901 Channel Drive
Santa Barbara, CA 93108
(805) 969-3231