



Mrs. Elva Refshauge Wightman

March 3, 1915 - June 12, 2011

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Our beautiful and beloved mother has passed from this earth, but she will forever remain in our hearts. She was a woman whose generosity of spirit and unconditional love for her family is a legacy to which we can all aspire.

Elva Lillian Refshauge was born to Edward and Mary Refshauge in Cedar Falls, Iowa on March 3, 1915 and was raised on Grand View Farm along with her two sisters, Marcella and Arletta. She eloped with our father, Robert Fulton Wightman, on February 7, 1938, and they embarked upon a journey to Santa Monica, California, where their three children were born and where they lived until 1969 when they moved to Santa Barbara, which they both believed (and rightly so) was heaven on earth. Elva worked as a secretary for Douglas Aircraft in Santa Monica for many years and then worked for Los Angeles Unified School District for 20 years, serving as school secretary in various schools in the district. Whether by coincidence or design (we never could be certain), mom happened to work at the same elementary, junior high and high schools her children attended, resulting in their having no other option than abiding by any and all school rules. After moving to Santa Barbara, Elva came out of retirement to work for many years as secretary of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, where she was a member for 42 years.

Mom had a great sense of humor, which provided her family with a life filled with fun. Family members would receive an annual birthday phone call with

mom playing a scratchy version of “Happy Birthday” on her ancient violin accompanied by her “singing” (howling, actually) dog Jacques in the background. She frequently outfitted our desert tortoise Myrtle with appropriate signage (Happy Birthday, Welcome Home) and even created a miniature covered wagon for Myrtle to pull around the yard.

Elva’s husband Robert preceded her in death in 1994. She is survived by her three loving children, Robert E. Wightman, Elaine Grimmesey (Robert, deceased), and Connie Buxton (Nigel); grandchildren Suzanne Grimmesey, Robert L. Grimmesey (Melissa), Robert C. Wightman (Kristiann), and Kristina Wightman. She is also survived by her sister, Arletta Kober (Kay), many adoring great grandchildren, nieces and nephews, and by her 70 year-old desert tortoise Myrtle, a family member for 56 years.

The family wishes to thank Dr. Laurence Mietus for providing compassionate and professional care for our mother these past few years, and would also like to thank her very special caregivers, Sylvia, Carina and Luz, all of whom mom loved. Also thanks to Visiting Nurse and Hospice Care who provided comfort and guidance in mom’s final days. Suzanne Grimmesey (Elva’s guardian angel granddaughter) enabled mom to stay in her own home to the end, and provided a rich and loving family life for her. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Visiting Nurse & Hospice Care or the Santa Barbara Humane Society in Elva’s name. A memorial service will be held at St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, 4575 Auhay Drive, Santa Barbara on Saturday, July 2nd at 11:30 AM.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

JUL 2. 11:30 AM (PT)

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church
4575 Auhay Dr.
Santa Barbara, CA 93110