

MARGARET BINGHAM ROBERTS

1918-2009



VIRGINIA: Margaret Bingham Roberts, 91, died peacefully at the home of her daughter and son-in-law, Karen & Jerry Bollin, at Seven Oaks, Palmyra, VA.

Mrs. Roberts was born Margaret Earnestine Bingham on September 26, 1918 in Bridgeport, Texas, the youngest child of Walter & Lydia Thomas Bingham. She was born on her own mother's birthday. Both of her parents passed away in the mid-1960s. Her siblings, Hortense Bingham Coffman, Joseph Bingham, W. Horace Bingham, and Justin "Buddy" Bingham all preceded Margaret in death.

Margaret was an honor student in Bridgeport and spent one year at business school in Dallas after high school. Before marriage, she worked for several small businesses in Bridgeport, Fort Worth, and Dallas.

In 1941, just after the start of WWII, Margaret married William Malone Roberts, then of Dallas, Texas. Soon after their marriage, they moved to San Diego, California where they both

worked in the newly-established aircraft factories to support the war effort. They moved to Long Beach, California where Margaret worked for the Douglas Aircraft Company as an air flight controls inspector for the B-17 bomber. She held a distinctive position as the only woman who could retain an airplane on the ground until it met the proper qualifications.

In 1945, they started their family with James, born in Long Beach. After the war, they moved to Days Creek, Oregon where Mr. Roberts worked as a log-truck driver and Margaret ran their small chicken ranch. Their next two children, Donald and Mary Ann, were born in Oregon. In 1952, they returned to California where Mr. Roberts worked his entire career as a line driver, usually from Los Angeles to the San Francisco Bay Area. In 1953, their last child, Karen, was born in Covina.

Mr. & Mrs. Roberts stressed education to their children, and all of them took that advice to heart. James was an honors graduate of Azusa High School where he served as class governor, student body president, varsity tennis player, and 1964 salutatorian. He graduated from Claremont Men College and Harvard Law School. After graduation from Gladstone High School, Donald served in the United States Navy during the Vietnam War as an electrician, then became an owner-operator. Mary Ann was an honors graduate of Azusa High School, attended Pitzer College and graduated from the University of California. Karen was an honors graduate of Gladstone High School and the University of Oregon, and received her MBA and MPA from the California State University. Afterward, she was an engineer for the McDonnell Douglas Corporation.

Margaret was a gardener hobbyist, as it always seemed she had a green thumb. She did not specialize in any plants or adopt any theories; she simply liked to see things grow. She was also a bit of a tinkerer, teaching her daughters how to make simple auto repairs and household fixes. Among her other delights were reading, puzzles, dominoes, quilting and decorative needlework. She proudly made clothes, drapes and quilts for her family.

One of Margaret's notable traits was that she was never a "joiner"; not for PTA, the Women's Club, or any political party. She quietly gave her support to causes she believed were good and valuable, and ignored the rest. She told all of her children that she would gladly join the PTA for the support to the schools, but she "would never attend those doughnut parties", much to their chagrin.

Mr. Roberts, "Bill" to family & friends alike, retired in 1976 after a brief illness. After living for nearly 30 years in Azusa, they began to travel the United States and Canada with an RV. In 1980, Bill suffered a debilitating stroke, and they returned to Azusa where Bill died in 1981. Margaret decided to remain in Azusa, near all of the friends and places she knew so well, and close enough to her family. By then, she had grandchildren. In the coming years, her son James would add four grandsons to the family.

In 2000, Margaret suffered her greatest loss and shock when James died suddenly in Los Angeles at age 55. She never truly recovered from the loss of her eldest child. Soon thereafter she began to exhibit signs of dementia, but continued to live independently well into her 80s.

In 2005, after spending nearly 25 years on her own after Bill's death, Margaret moved to Virginia to live near her daughter, Karen, and son-in-law, Jerry. In 2007, she moved into their home, where she remained until she passed away on December 3, 2009, surrounded by those closest to her.

While Margaret's family appreciates all loving thoughts and prayers, they kindly request that, in lieu of flowers, all memorials be sent to the Hospice of the Piedmont, 675 Peter Jefferson Parkway, Charlottesville, VA 2291, in honor of both Mrs. Roberts and those who provided her with such tender care.