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Phyllis Graff

1924 - 2021



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PHYLLIS GRAFF OBITUARY

Phyllis Firestone Graff
Nov 24, 1924 - Jan 20, 2021

Phyllis Firestone Graff passed away peacefully on Wednesday, January 20, 2021 at the age of 96. She was predeceased by the love of her life, Norman Graff, to whom she was married for 65 years; her parents, Rose and Allan Firestone of St Paul MN; and two brothers, Richard and Daniel Firestone. She leaves behind four children and their spouses, Marc (Karin Forrest), Wendy (Darryl Price), Steven (Kim Honig), Doug (Cindy Graff); eight grandchildren (Rebecca and Benjamin; Adam and Mike; Mollie and David; Shana and Daniel) and their spouses; four great-grandchildren as well as nieces, nephews, cousins and many, many friends.

Phyllis was born in St Paul MN and graduated from the University of Minnesota, where she met Norman. They married in August 1946. Phyllis and Norman lived in Chicago IL, San Francisco CA, Topeka KS, and Springfield MO before settling in San Mateo in the summer of 1955. They lived in the Eichler Highlands before building their dream home, a Mid-Century Modern classic, in Hillsborough in 1964, where Phyllis lived until she moved to The Peninsula Regent in 2012. Phyllis spent her last days in Southern California with family.

Phyllis loved the natural world, dating from childhood summers paddling her red canoe around Balsam Lake, and delighted in sharing that love with her children and grandchildren. Whether it was poking at

a seaweed holdfast, frying up a pound of bacon for breakfast in Tuolumne Meadows or walking along Sawyer Camp Road, she was as comfortable in the natural world as she was entertaining in her own home, which she did often and with grace and aplomb.

Phyllis worked as a counselor aide at Burlingame High School (thoughtfully not at SMHS, where three of her children attended) for many years and was a docent for decades with both the California Academy of Sciences and the DeYoung Museum of Art where she specialized in the works of Africa, Oceania and Asia. She also volunteered at the San Mateo Public Library. She was active in PTAs, Temple Beth El Sisterhood, and community causes.

She and Norman traveled extensively, often to lesser-known spots, with a focus on history and culture. She was a doer and a maker, read voraciously, enjoyed the symphony, ballet and theater. She didn't have a snobby bone in her body, opened her home and heart to those around her, generally gave people the benefit of the doubt, had a good sense of humor, was candid and sincere. She had a wonderful life and was grateful for it.

A virtual celebration of Phyllis's life will be held at noon, February 21. Please contact a family member for details.

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