



Betty Woodfill Mahaffey

April 28, 1927 - July 19, 2007

Betty Woodfill Mahaffey
1927-2007

When Betty Woodfill Mahaffey would make her travel arrangements to visit Bolivar the first week of every July, she'd tell her family, I've made my plans to go home, even though she had lived in suburban Chicago since 1956. On August 8, 2007, Betty will return home one last time.

Betty died on January 7, 2007 at the age of 79 due to complications from chronic lymphatic leukemia. Born on April 28, 1927 in California, she was raised in Bolivar, the daughter of Robert and Elisabeth Woodfill who owned the City Rexall Drug Store on the west side of the square until the mid-1970s. Her only sibling, John Mark Woodfill, worked in the family business and at Stephens Pharmacy until his passing in 2000.

Betty was a proud Bolivar High School Class of 1945 graduate and valedictorian of her class. Her closest friends until her death were a group of six classmates who gathered in Bolivar the first week of every July to attend the annual BHS Class of 1945 Reunion: Wanda Hacker Allen, Donna Murray Parminter, Rosemary Redford McCord, Mary Vevelle Davidson Lodge, and Mary Helen Harris Goble. Following high school, Betty graduated from the University of Missouri in 1949.

That same year, she married Fred Mahaffey, the son of friendly drug store rivals in Bolivar, Bert and Pearl Mahaffey, who owned Mahaffey Drugs on the north side of the square until the mid-1960s. In 1958 Bettys family settled in the Chicago suburb of Park Ridge where she established a second legion of friends through dozens of civic and charitable activities. After their divorce in 1992, Fred retired in Bolivar, but the couple spoke on the phone every Sunday. Fred died in June 2006 and is interned near Urbana.

As a Mother, Betty never missed her childrens school and athletic events; she was always their (and her grandchildrens) biggest fan. Among Bettys many creative talents was baking hundreds of Christmas gingerbread man cookies for her family, friends and their families. The cookies, with personalized names in icing, are still used in many homes as Christmas decorations. After her children left home, Betty started a 25-year career in healthcare management and wellness programs. This work inspired her to earn a masters degree in healthcare management from DePaul University in Chicago at the age of 65.

After graduation she started traveling the world with her friends, but her home was filled with Bolivar photos, coffee cups, blankets, and memories of her family here. She always spoke proudly of Bolivar, endlessly retelling her stories of jitterbug dancing in the Nifty Caf, the day Truman came to town, and growing up in small town America.

Betty is survived by two sons, Chris of Park Ridge, Illinois, and Mark (Ashley) of Escondido, California. She had four grandchildren, Michael, Katherine, Sara, and Mark Christopher, the last of whom, at age three months, she saw just one week before her passing.

A graveside service will be held for Bettys hometown friends on August 8 at 11 a.m. at the Upton-Woodfill family grave site near the entrance of Greenwood

Cemetery. In the event of rain, the Butler Chapel will be used. In lieu of flowers, donations are requested to The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society at www.leukemia.org or the Polk County Genealogical Society. Arrangements will be handled by Butler Funeral Home of Bolivar.

Friends may sign the guest book or sent private condolences at www.butlerfuneralhome.com

PDF Printable Version

Tribute Wall



“ *Betty Woodfill Mahaffey*

October 05, 2023 at 05:18 AM



“ *Betty Woodfill Mahaffey*

January 26, 2023 at 04:15 PM