



## Betty P. Defibaugh

May 12, 1925 - August 17, 2020

Betty P. Defibaugh passed away on August 17, 2020 of complications from a fall at home. Betty was born in 1925 to her parents H. Carlyle & Minnie Pelot in Higginsville, MO. Known as Betty Lou, she was the older of two girls. Her sister, Mary Jane, was two years younger than her. Mary Jane passed away in 1981. Betty grew up dreaming of studying butterflies from a young age. She graduated from Higginsville High School in 1943. She worked for a year after high school supporting the war effort building aircraft engines to make enough money for college at the University of Kansas, in Lawrence, KS. She continued to work while attending college and graduated in 1948 with a degree in entomology. She had long dreamed of going to Hawaii and one of her professors had gone on to the University of Hawaii in Honolulu. She wrote to him and was offered a job. It was in Hawaii where she met her husband, Francis Defibaugh, at church. They married in 1950 in Higginsville and continued to live in Hawaii. Francis was offered a job on Canton Island in the South Pacific with the Civil Aeronautic Administration. Betty was the first post mistress on Canton Island. Canton Island at that time was a joint U.S.-British possession about 500 miles south of Hawaii. After Canton Island they moved to Los Angeles in 1957 and then moved into their new home in 1958 where she lived for the next 62 years. Betty and Francis raised four children, Mike, Ron (Claudia), Patricia, and Steve (Sharon). She is also survived by five grandchildren, Phillip, Grace, Ethan, Henry, and Anna. Francis preceded her in death in 2002. They were married for more than 51 years. She was a 51 year member of Gardena First Christian Church and most recently attended First Christian Church of Torrance.

Betty worked at the U.S. Post Office for 33 years before retiring in 1986. Betty kept very busy in retirement with cooking classes, travel, and travel shows. She also started volunteering at the Natural History Museum and was a volunteer there for more than 25 years and even has a tiny fly named after her. Betty also belonged to the Audubon Society and the Lorquin Entomological Society. Betty traveled often in retirement with trips around the U.S., to Europe, Australia, and too many trips to Hawaii to count. Her last trip was in 2017 to Hawaii with Mike and Patricia. They attended the church where she and Francis met and she was able to find the first apartment they lived in after they got married. One of

the highlights of that trip was a visit to the University of Hawaii entomology department. We just dropped in and Betty told the office staff that she used to work there in the 1950s. They made a big fuss over her and had her come into the lab where the graduate students were working and she talked to them for quite some time about what it was like to work there as a women in the 50s.

While Betty wasn't able to get around too well the last couple of years, she had a full life and did all of the things she wanted to do. She considered her life well spent. She is survived by her four children and five grandchildren, as well as nieces and nephews from her sister's family.

# Comments

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