



Betty Van Acker

April 14, 1923 - February 5, 2019

Mom was born Elizabeth Mary Thomas, at home in Long Beach, California, to Cecil La Rue Thomas and Wilhimina (Minnie) Louise Stohlman. Church and school records show her delayed birth certificate was confirmed by Aunts Dorothy McQuillin and Therese Krah. Betty had 3 older brothers, Gerald, La Rue, and Kenny, and 2 older sisters, Eloise and Janet. When Betty was 8 years old, her brother Don was born.

When she was in 4th grade during the Depression, her family moved to San Pedro where her father started an Auto Repair Garage. As a child, she studied the violin, tap danced, and sang while enrolled in "Meglen Kiddies". Her most memorable performance was "My Blue Heaven".

At 15, she joined Jobs Daughters, a Masonic order for young girls. She was elected to become "Queen", a 2 ½ year commitment. She memorized the 'ritual' of Job's life from the Bible and exemplified before 250 Masons, Eastern Stars and State Officers representing Bethel #24 in San Pedro.

After graduating from San Pedro High School in 1941, she worked at Van Kamps Bakery for 18 months. Following that, she attended Business College to become a court reporter, which she found to be too confining. She saved her money and then attended University of California at Santa Barbara for one year. In June she transferred to UCLA, supporting herself by living in a private home and working as a nanny.

At UCLA she pledged Gamma Phi Beta, a noteworthy sorority. In October of that year, she became engaged to Frank Van Acker, a Stanford graduate. They were married February 23, 1947, and honeymooned at Frank's family cottage on a cliff in Pismo Beach.

They moved to Wilmington to be near the Union Oil Refinery where Dad worked, followed by a move to San Pedro and finally to Rancho Palos Verdes. In 1948 Nancy was born, followed by Scott in 1950, Betty Lou in 1953, and Denise in 1956.

Mom was part of a franchise called Stitch n Sew, an innovative and new “polyester” fabric with accompanying methods of construction. She created manuals and books specific to these new methodologies. Subsequently, she accepted a position as a store manager in Los Angeles working for House of Fabric, where she successfully promoted this retail fabric store.

In 1972, Dad was offered an opportunity to manage a refinery in Seoul, Korea, where they lived in a guarded compound for 5 years. They returned home, Dad retired, and they spent their time traveling many countries. They also spent 10 years of happy adventures traveling in their motorhome with the Elegant Cruisers.

After Dad’s passing in 2001, Mom downsized to a smaller home, then transitioned to a Senior Living Residence where she loved her POKER, her bible study and the many other activities offered.

Mom wrote, “ I have many blessings in my life! My husband and my children. The Thomas and Stohlman genes gave me the dreams to be successful in my many passions” .

She is survived by her 4 children , 11 grandchildren, and 9 great-grand children and left an indelible mark on each of them.

Cemetery

Events

Green Hills Memorial Park
27501 S. Western Ave.
Rancho Palos Verdes, CA,
90275

**FEB 22 Funeral Ceremony with Graveside to
Follow at 1:00pm 11:30AM**

Green Hills Memorial Chapel
27501 S Western Ave., Rancho Palos Verde, CA, US,
90275