



Joann J. McCarthy

January 20, 2013

JoAnn Wilgen McCarthy was stunningly beautiful, fiercely proud and insistently independent. An Illinois native, she was born in Wedron, raised in Ottawa and for much of her long life called Chicago home. The daughter of German immigrants, Jo was the middle sister of seven whose family home, still standing today, was ruled by their widowed mother Emilie after the death in 1923 of Klemens Wilgen, a successful industrialist. As a child of the Depression JoAnn took great pride in her frugality. She was a bargain shopper and a show-stopper who could find a \$500 dress for \$5. And until her last days, she looked like a million bucks. JoAnn briefly studied drama, which she practiced to great effect. Using her theatrical abilities in 1939, she outsmarted an armed robber disguised as a Western Union messenger, as noted in a Chicago newspaper. Forty years later, she entertained fellow travelers in Morocco with a prolonged screaming session astride a camel. During World War II, JoAnn's regal bearing (and extended family) caught the eye of Maurice Charles McCarthy, who became a U.S. Army Air Corps major and later a prominent Chicago attorney. Married in 1943, their joy was compounded with the birth of their only son, Maurice Wilgen McCarthy -- a red-haired Christmas gift who passed the dimpled chin inherited from his mother onto her grandson. JoAnn died January 20, 2013, after a brief illness, in Libertyville, Illinois. Survivors include her son Maurice "Mac" McCarthy (Nancy Leson) and grandson Nathaniel Wilgen McCarthy; sister Marian Wilgen; nieces Agnes Roach (Ronald A. Ferguson, M.D.), Linda Barbaro and Jacque Roach;

nephew Michael (Suzie) Roach. She was preceded in death by her husband, parents and sisters Helen, Agnes, Elsie and Emily Wilgen and Gertrude Roach. Prayers at 9:30 a.m. Friday, January 25 at Burnett-Dane Funeral Home, 120 W. Park Ave., Libertyville. Services will continue to St. Joseph, 121 E. Maple, Libertyville for mass at 10 a.m. Interment follows at Calvary Cemetery, Ottawa. In lieu of flowers, consider a charitable donation.