



Shirley R. Edwards

July 10, 1932 - December 10, 2022

Shirley Ruth Edwards passed away on December 10, 2022 at Northwestern Medicine Lake Forest Hospital at the age of 90.

Shirley was born on July 10, 1932 in Sheboygan, WI to Alfred and Clara Sommerfeldt. As the youngest daughter of a struggling artist and working mother, Shirley worked from a young age to help support her family. She took on a variety of jobs, from poultry-plucker to librarian – remembering some roles more fondly than others. At a 1952 dance with soldiers stationed out at Camp Haven near Sheboygan, Shirley charmed a young Californian WWII Army veteran named Ralph Edwards. The pair wed the next year, beginning a 60-year marriage that lasted until Ralph's passing in 2013.

Shirley enjoyed telling colorful tales of her travels alongside Ralph as his service with the U.S. Army took their young family around the world in the '50s and '60s. Her characteristic grit and devotion were particularly evident in a days-long odyssey she endured as a new mother to reach Ralph in Füssen, Germany from the American heartland. After shepherding her newborn through strange cities, in assorted military vehicles and aircraft cargo holds, and across Bavaria with limited information and communications, she finally located Ralph, handed him their baby, and delivered a blunt directive that travels for the young couple would be more pleasant moving forward. In future family moves to the pineapple fields of Hawaii and the farmland of rural

Wisconsin - as well as memorable family summer camping trips to National Parks - Shirley would indeed make happier memories with her young family.

As a child of the Great Depression, a military spouse, and a mother who lost her young son Terry to leukemia in 1960, Shirley was no stranger to adversity. Yet she was indefatigable and strong - raising her children Vicky, Sherry, and Steve, settling the family down in Knollwood, IL beginning in 1967, serving as an active member of Grace Methodist Church in Lake Bluff, supporting Ralph with service to the Lake County Shrine Club, and embarking on her own promising career in civil service. By the time Shirley retired in 1992, she had blazed a trail to the position of Comptroller for the Midwest Army Recruiting Center at Fort Sheridan, IL – and was the highest-graded female civilian employee in the region.

On a sunny July 10, 2022, family and friends gathered in Shirley's Knollwood backyard to celebrate her 90th birthday with her. The conversation that day spoke to a life well-lived. There was discussion about Shirley's later-in-life hobbies like gardening and genealogy, which had her travel to libraries and archives across the country to piece together a deeply researched, comprehensive family story - including relatives dating back to the Mayflower. A photographer captured Shirley's winning smile, known to her loved ones just as well as her hearty laugh and sharp Midwestern sense of humor and sarcasm that lasted even through the health challenges of her final days. One family friend noted how Shirley opened her home to him repeatedly and without fuss during difficult parts of his youth - and how he would do anything for her in return. And one speech in her honor called her "my hero," for her dogged tenacity, humility, commitment to her loved ones, and understated generosity. That day and to her final day, our Shirley, Mom, Grandma, Nana, and Great-Grandma never ceased to ask how you were doing - and never stopped looking out for the ones she loved.

Shirley's memory lives on with her two children Vicky (Dirk) Rasmussen and Steve (Marty) Edwards, her son-in-law Dave McHone, her six grandchildren Elizabeth (Cory) McHone Alvey, Tanner and Taylor Edwards, and Kristen, Erik, and Emily Rasmussen, as well as her great-grandson Arthur Alvey and a legion of cherished family and friends.

Shirley was preceded in death by her husband Benjamin "Ralph" Edwards, daughter Sherry McHone, son Terry Edwards, sister Margaret Herman, and brother James Sommerfeldt.

On Saturday, January 14, 2023, A visitation for Shirley will be held at at Burnett-Dane Funeral Home, 120 W. Park Ave, Libertyville, IL at 1:00 p.m. followed by a memorial service at 3:00 p.m. at the same location. Shirley will be interred alongside beloved family at Lutheran Cemetery in her native Sheboygan, WI.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions honoring Shirley's life can be made to Shriners Children's Hospital, 2211 N. Oak Park Ave. Chicago, IL 60707. <https://www.shrinerschildrens.org/en/locations/chicago> For info: 847-362-3009 or share a memory at www.burnettdane.com.

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN 14. 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM (CT)

Burnett-Dane Funeral Home
120 West Park Avenue
Libertyville, IL 60048
(847) 362-3009

Memorial Service

JAN 14. 3:00 PM (CT)

Burnett-Dane Funeral Home
120 West Park Avenue
Libertyville, IL 60048
(847) 362-3009

Tribute Wall



“ *Beautiful in Blue* was purchased for the family of Shirley R. Edwards.



January 12, 2023 at 09:13 PM