



Madge Barron Griffing

June 10, 1924 - July 23, 2018

Madge Barron Griffing 1924-2018

Madge Griffing passed away after a brief illness on Monday July 23rd in Camarillo CA. She was laid to rest alongside her late husband Capt CW Griffing at the Riverside National Cemetery, Riverside CA, on Monday July 23rd. Madge was 94. She is survived by 3 sisters, Elaine, Joanne, and Mary; her 4 adult children, Barry, Steve, Julie and Elaine; 10 grandchildren, 15 great grandchildren, and 2 great-great grandchildren.

Madge (or “Mol”, the family moniker she bore for half her life) was born June 10th, 1924 in Jonesboro TN, the 3rd child of William and Elizabeth Barron. As the depression deepened in the mid 30’s Mol’s parents sent her to live with William’s sister in North Miami, Miss Molly Fink. Aunt Molly was a loving but strict Baptist authoritarian, who made sure Mol went to church every Sunday, dressed modestly, and abstained from tobacco and alcohol. Aunt Molly also insisted on her niece achieving academic and cultural excellence, which included piano lessons at the home of Miss Marilla Griffing, where she became acquainted with her future love, Charles Griffing. As a teen, Mol sang in the church choir and high school chorus, and accompanied herself on her Gibson acoustic guitar singing pop and country standards. In fact, Mol and her sisters formed a singing group which performed at Miami Beach hotels, to the consternation of Aunt Molly. After graduation from high school, Mol was accepted at Florida State College for Women in Tallahassee (later becoming Florida State University, where son Barry attended 1965 – 67). It was at FSCW that Mol discovered a talent for playing tennis, which became a lifelong passion. After her sophomore year, Mol left college to go to work back in Miami for Pan American Airways. It was during this time that Lt Charles Griffing began seriously dating Madge, culminating in their getting engaged in early 1945.

They were married in Miami on February 23, 1945, followed by a “honey moon” cross-country trip to Pasadena CA, where Chuck had been accepted as an engineering grad student at California Institute of Technology. Two years later, the Griffing’s had their first child at Huntington Memorial Hospital in Pasadena, Ross Barron. After Chuck received his

Master of Science Degree from CalTech, the Navy transferred him to service at the Panama Canal Zone, where their 2nd child was born, Steven David. In 1949, Lt Commander Charles Griffing was transferred to suburban DC to work at the David Taylor Model Basin. The couple bought a modest 3-bedroom home in Bethesda MD, and Madge had a 3rd child, Juliette Elizabeth in 1950. Three years later, Charles was transferred to the Pt Mugu Missile Testing Range; the family rented out their Bethesda home and bought a brand-new home in Oxnard CA, subsequently having their last child in 1954, Elaine Marilla. Sometime Chuck would have “the duty”, being out of the house for days at a time. Mol took advantage of Chuck’s absence by gathering the 3 older kids into the master bed to read Bible stories to them, which played a significant part in their spiritual formation.

With Chuck’s promotion to Commander came transfer back to the DC area where the family resided from 1955 -1966 (with the exception of a 12 month tour of duty at Jacksonville FL Naval Air Station in 1959). This was an exciting and challenging era for Mol, being the mother of 4 teen and pre-teen kids, driving them to dancing and violin lessons, while attending American University in pursuit of a Music degree, which she received in 1965. The family became active members of Bethesda First Baptist Church, where they became a shaping force in the music ministry there. Mol served as Adult and Children’s Choir Director for over 7 years while Chuck served as the Organist, overseeing the purchase and installation of a fine pipe-organ. Chuck and Madge both commented that their sojourn at Bethesda First Baptist was their most blessed season of Christian service, growth, and fellowship.

It was also in this era that Mol discovered her unique talent for producing and writing musicals. Her first musical production was a child’s musical based on the biblical story of Noah and the Ark, starring Chuck as the voice of God, Barry as Noah, the other siblings as Noah’s family, and our parakeet as the dove. Mol came up with costumes and primitive staging in our Conway Road house living room. After a few rehearsals, Mol invited neighbors to our living room to enjoy the musical production (Mol on keyboard). Six years later, Mol had a unique opportunity to write a musical for an annual Chicken Festival held in the Maryland Eastern Shore town of Cambridge. The result was “Pepper and Spice,” which featured original tunes by Mol, with Barry and Steve playing bass and electric guitars. “Pepper and Spice” was the first of Mol’s musicals to be professionally recorded.

After receiving Naval orders, the Griffing family relocated from the East Coast to Palos Verdes Peninsula in the summer of 1966. Ten years later, after Chuck retired from the Navy and from TRW, Madge and Chuck built their dream home the the Glenoak Hills area of Temecula in 1976. Appropriately, they named their hilltop estate Casa Lirica . . . House of Song. Despite the distance to drive to Casa Lirica, Mol relaunched her piano and voice

teaching business. Then, in 1977, Mol put together her 3rd significant “musical” . . . Celebrate Messiah, featuring the choirs from 3 area churches performing 3 famous choruses from Handel’s Messiah: And the Glory of the Lord, For Unto Us, and the Hallelujah Chorus, with Chuck on organ and Mol conducting the “mass” choir. The participants in that first Celebrate Messiah demanded a return engagement in December 1978. The Griffings were able to recruit more and more orchestral instruments over the next 8 years to accompany Handel’s oratorio. This annual concert continues today under the direction of Mol’s sons Barry and Steve Griffing. The sizable community choir and orchestra will perform the Messiah for the 41st time on December 2, 2018 at Grace Presbyterian Church in Temecula. L I L
S E P S E P By the early 80’s, the Griffing’s were recognized as cultural pioneers in the Temecula Valley. In 1984, the Griffing’s conceived of a musical that celebrated the rich history of Temecula, which they ended up calling Temeculi Temecula. Chuck fashioned a clever storyline which included a mix and history and legend about Temecula, while Mol combined pop tunes, present and past, with her own original tunes. Temeculi Temecula featured a cast of two dozen singer-actors, a rhythm section and small orchestra, original costumes, sets, and props. Temeculi Temecula had a remarkable 20-year run, from 1984 to 2004, in some of Temecula’s most notable venues (like Temecula HS and Old Town Temecula Comm. Theatre). Mol was esteemed equally by secular and sacred area musicians.

Madge and Chuck both loved people and were hospitable and loyal to friends. Their open-heartedness resulted in a Casa Lirica “open-door” policy. Mol was always quick to provide a sandwich and beverage to itinerant workers helping Chuck in the avocado and citrus groves. Madge and Chuck hosted young men in their extended family weeks at a time who needed special help and guidance. They were both master Christian disciple-makers, combining generous hospitality with a straight-up Christian lifestyle to reshape the lives of their Casa Lirica guests into the image of Christ. We will miss Mol’s optimism, sense of humor, and fun-loving zest for life. “I go to prepare a place for you (John 14.2).” We rejoice that Mol’s in the perfect place, full of loved ones, fellowship, and glorious music!

A celebration of her life was held at the Temecula Methodist Church, 42690 Margarita Rd., Temecula, CA 92592 3:00 PM August 18, 2018

Comments



“ 1 file added to the album Obituary Wall



England Family Mortuary - February 07, 2019 at 08:48 AM



“ Thank you all for your prayers and support at the loss of my last surviving Grandparent, Madge Barron Griffing. In addition to everything in words, my Grandma "Mol" (along with Grandma Taylor) taught me how to read, helped me with with my musical studies, and gave me the foundation of how to be a Southern Lady, long before I became a Texan. My daughter will bear her 3rd Great-Great Grandchild in November. I can only dream of becoming the kind of Grandparent she and all of my Grandparents were; just as my mom and dad have been to my daughter. I will always love & miss you, dear Mol, until we meet again in Glory. Give my beloved brother, Daniel, your "Danny-Boy" a huge hug for me!!

August 12, 2018 at 12:00 AM