

Half Staff – Eleanor (Ellie) Saunders Olmstead Parrott

September 22, 2020



Rockport, Mass. – Eleanor (Ellie) Saunders Olmstead Parrott, 89, died peacefully on Tuesday, September 22 at her home surrounded by her family.

She was born in Paterson, N.J., on May 20, 1931, to the late Lt. Hugh Douglas Olmstead, U.S. Coast Guard, and Eleanor (Wennerberg) Olmstead. Her father's career with the Coast Guard moved their family to New Jersey, Florida, Washington, and Mississippi during the first 16 years of her life. In 1948, her family returned to Gloucester and settled in her maternal grandparents' home on Plum St., East Gloucester, and Ellie joined the senior class and graduated from Gloucester High School, Class of 1949.

Eleanor attended Boston University 1949-53, (B.S. Elementary Education, 1953) where she enjoyed college life to the fullest, being very active and holding leadership

positions in many groups including her sorority Alpha Gamma Delta. She met her former husband, Charles R. Parrott at B.U., and they married following graduation. For the next seven years, they lived in NH, Mississippi, Oklahoma, and Japan, where Eleanor taught elementary education both on and off the Air Force bases where they were stationed, and started their family with their first three children in Oklahoma.

The family settled in Rockport in 1963 and soon after welcomed their youngest child. In addition to raising four children and substitute teaching, Ellie was also active in the community with the Garden Club, 4-H Club, League of Women Voters, and Congregational Church during these years. In 1973, she returned to full-time teaching in Gloucester as well as continued her education completing a Master's in Education plus 60 graduate credits. Most of her teaching career was at Beeman Memorial School in Gloucester as a beloved third-grade teacher in Room 9. Ellie was a natural teacher and when asked what she loved about teaching, she said "I have fun every day. I have the most fun watching them catch on, giving them an assignment, and then seeing them sparkle with excitement at solving whatever the task is. That makes me most happy. I just glow inside and have a really wonderful feeling of fun and satisfaction."

During summers and after retiring from her 40-year teaching career, she enjoyed many interests, including sailing, gardening, traveling near and far, antiques, reading, taking art classes (painting), craft and wreath making for St Mary's Church, exploring the genealogy of Olmstead and Wennerberg families, playing bridge, and spending time with her children and extended family as well as many friends across the country and on Cape Ann.

Her humor and fun-loving spirit, curiosity, love of learning, and generosity will be missed by all who knew her.

Ellie is survived by her four children, Nancy Olson and her husband Richard of Rockport, MA, Jane Tutein and her husband, Jeffrey of Rockport, MA, Bryan Parrott, D.V.M of Ipswich, Laurie Parrott of Rockport, MA., and six grandchildren: Jason C. Olson, Elizabeth Olson Harrington (Sean), Julie Olson Brown (Liam), Kevin T. Olson (Zan), Adam R. Parrott, Olivia C. Parrott. She is also survived by her four great-grandchildren, her sister-in-law, Sheila Olmstead of Falmouth, Maine; her nephew Jonathan Olmstead and his wife Nancy of North Portland, Maine, and her niece, Caroline Wallach and her husband Scott of Rye, NY; and 3 grand nieces and nephews; and many Olmstead and Wennerberg cousins. Her brother, Hugh D. Olmstead, Jr., and sister Doris E. Olmstead predeceased her.

Due to COVID, a private graveside service was held at Mt. Pleasant Cemetery, Gloucester, on Monday, September 28. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made in her name to St. Mary's Episcopal Church, 34 Broadway Ave, Rockport, MA or Care Dimensions, 75 Sylvan Street, Suite B-102, Danvers, MA 01923. Arrangements by the Campbell Funeral Home, 61 Middle Street, Gloucester. Information, directions, condolences at www.campbellfuneral.com.