

Half Staff – Martha Hall Bliss Safford

January 31, 2019



January 03, 1933 – January 31, 2019. Rockport – Martha Hall Bliss Safford, 86, wife of Nicholas H. Safford, passed away Thursday morning, January 31, 2019, surrounded by her loving family. Martha was born in Cambridge, Mass., to Arthur C. Bliss and Isabel Hall Bliss on January 3, 1933. She was the eldest grandchild of Isabel and Damon Hall, Esq., who won restitution for the victims of the Great Boston Molasses Flood of 1919.

Martha attended Shady Hill School in Belmont and was secretary of her class for decades, hosting numerous reunions. She graduated from Belmont High School, class of 1951. Martha was a lover of art and art history from an early age. She received her BA in Art History and Technique from Cornell University in 1955. Upon graduating, she taught Art and Art History

and attended classes toward her master's at Mills College in Oakland, California. She completed her master's in Art from Boston University, after which she taught at Mass Bay Junior College and established the art department at Newton Junior College. Martha met Nick, her husband-to-be, in 1960 at the Bartlett Singles Ski Club near Cannon Mountain in N.H.; they married in 1965 and settled in Rockport, Mass. Martha continued her love of art, following Cape Ann artists and befriending many. In the 1970s, as her children were enrolled in the Rockport Schools, she initiated an art history appreciation Picture Program, which exposed students to historically significant examples of fine art. She was also involved in establishing the popular Learner's Choice program, which introduced school children to crafts and trades by recruiting adults from the community to share their expertise.



Active members of the Sandy Bay Yacht Club, they enjoyed racing Firefly dinghies together and cruising on larger sailboats. Martha was beloved by many Star Boat sailors for her faithful and exuberant participation in their regattas, especially through sharing her passion for art. She collected paintings by Cape Ann artists and donated them as prizes for the annual Ned Hay Star Boat Regatta in Rockport. A lifelong teacher at heart, she used the award ceremony as an opportunity to educate visiting sailors to the details and aesthetics of each painting and artist, and then delighted in seeing which ones the winning skippers and crews chose.

Spending time with family and friends was of utmost importance to Martha. She was the ringleader of frequent gatherings of extended family and friends; a highlight of winter was the annual family and friends ski weekend. Her life-long athletic passion was alpine skiing. She and her sister Susan learned to ski at an early age, with their parents, at Suicide Six (Vt.) during the inaugural decade of operation of the first rope tow in the

U.S. Her ski bags were always packed and ready to go; she would frequently pick up grandkids and take them to Nashoba or ski with them in Vt. She was blessed to be able to ski into her 80s, usually wearing wildly colored ski pants. She was a wonderful, caring mother, aunt and grandmother. She loved to write poetry, and often wrote poems for friends and family for special occasions, both as toasts and roasts. She often gave books as presents, with the interests of each recipient in mind. She would let her grandchildren listen to their music as she drove them to activities, and might bring some Elvis or Johnny Cash for her contribution.

In addition to her husband, Martha is survived by her son John A. Safford and his wife Deborah of South Hamilton, Mass.; her daughter Jennie A. B. Meyer and her husband James of West Gloucester, Mass.; and six grandchildren, Thomas, Matthew, and Rosie Safford, and Oliver, Delilah, and Carl Meyer; her sister Susan Bliss Alden of Burlington, Vt., and her nephews and nieces, John B. Alden and wife Deborah and children, Julie A. May and her husband David and children, and Holly A. Burns and her husband Stephen and children. Martha is also survived by her Hall cousins, Sarah Stedman Russell and her husband Theodore, Sandra Sampson Sloan and her husband Norton, and David Sampson and his wife Arlene, and her cousins' children and grandchildren. Martha was predeceased by her cousin Isabel Stedman; and her brothers-in-law George Safford Jr., and Peter D. Alden.

A memorial service to celebrate Martha's life will be held on Sunday, February 10, at 1:30 p.m., at the First Congregational Church of Rockport located at 12 School Street, Rockport, MA. Martha would love it if women wear her trademark brightly colored clothing, headbands/scarves and men wear colorful shirts or ties.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in her memory to The Sandy Bay Yacht Club Sailing Program Scholarship Fund, Inc. (P.O. Box 37, Rockport MA 01966) or the First Congregational Church of Rockport, UCC.

Arrangements by the Greely Funeral Home, 212 Washington Street, Gloucester. For online condolences, please visit www.greelyfuneralhome.com