

Half Staff – Ann Porter Colley

December 31, 2014

ROCKPORT, MA: Ann Porter Colley, 88, known as Porter in the community of Rockport, Mass., passed away peacefully in her sleep Wednesday morning, December 31, 2014, in Den Mar Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Rockport. Porter was born in Chester, Pa., on April 22, 1926, and was the daughter of the late William Edward and Frances (Terfry) Colley. She was predeceased by her brother, Marshall Colley, who died in August 2009. She is survived by her niece, Jane Salce of Connecticut; and her nephew, Richard Colley of Arizona.

Porter was a great believer in helping others and it was quite evident in her life. Porter worked most of her life in hospitals in Pennsylvania and Massachusetts as a medical assistant and in medical records. She became dedicated to advocating and educating with the Neurofibromatosis Foundation. In 1980, she was the first person with NF to publicly come forward, bringing the disease that afflicted her body out into public awareness.

She appeared on many TV shows, including Phil Donahue and Ripley's Believe It or Not. In July of 1990, she was flown to Washington, D.C., by the NF Foundation to take part in a news conference concerning the fact that the gene that causes NF was discovered. She was aware that the clinical findings would not help her at that stage in her life, however, she felt the news "Would help many down the road with this horrible disease." She had a great sense of humor about living with NF and often joked about how she could dress up on Halloween and not need a mask.

Porter also collected money for hospice and was very proud of her work. One year, she raised funds by walking throughout her community, enduring the pain from the NF tumors on the bottoms of her feet and raised over \$8000 by herself. Because of her selfless nature, many in the community did not know how difficult her fund-raising and advocacy were on her because she was driven to help others and put smiles on the faces of all the people she met.

In keeping with her wishes, there are no visiting hours or service. Her burial will be held privately in the summer of 2015. Donations may be made online, in her memory to The Neurofibromatosis Foundation or Childrens Tumor Foundation, 120 Wall St., 16th Floor, New York, NY 10005-4002. Arrangements by the Burgess & Mackey Funeral Home, 201 Main St. Rockport, MA 01966. Condolences may be given at www.burgessandmackey.com.