

Half Staff – Emily L. Wick, 91

March 21, 2013



Rockport — Emily L. Wick, died peacefully of old age in her home in Rockport on March 21, 2013. She was 91 years old. Aunt Emily, everyone's favorite aunt, has left behind an interesting and unusual life. She was born on December 9, 1921 in Youngstown, Ohio, daughter of James L. Wick, Jr. and Clare Dryer Wick. She attended Mount Holyoke College where she earned a BS and MA in chemistry. She went on to MIT and earned her doctorate, also in chemistry. After working for the prominent firm of A.D. Little, where she discovered the chemistry for foods we take for granted such as Miracle Whip and Campbell's soups, she joined the faculty at MIT in the Department of Food Technology where she developed food systems for the newly formed astronaut corps. She became the first

woman to rise through the ranks to achieve tenure at MIT and was also appointed Associate Dean for Student Affairs. As the first woman member of the MIT Corporation, she was very instrumental in early efforts to assure that women students and staff played an equal role in the life of the university and had the same opportunities as men, as well as in developing a gender blind admissions policy.

In 1973 she returned to Mount Holyoke as Dean of the Faculty and later Special Assistant to the President for Long-Range Planning. After thirteen very happy years at Mount Holyoke, Emily retired in 1986 and returned to her beloved Rockport.

Emily's true love from the age of ten until her last days was sailing. She spent her first summer in Rockport in 1937. In the 1940's she and her sisters bought an O Boat called "The Little Urchin". Subsequently, she became a winning skipper of a Star Boat, a Jolly Boat, a Firefly, and ultimately a Bullseye. Until very recently she could be found every weekend on the water. Even when she became too old to skipper a boat she loved to go out in the committee boat or watch the races from her house on the edge of the harbor. We all remember the excitement in 1954 when the North American Star Championships were held in Rockport; Emily was very much a part of that project.

In 1988, Emily became the first woman Commodore of the Sandy Bay Yacht Club and helped move the club toward a modern professional operation. She was very interested in ensuring that membership in the club be affordable for everyone, especially teenagers. She is widely remembered among club members, and the committee boat has been named for her.

Somehow, Emily also found the time to be an active member of the Appalachian Mountain Club and was a life long birder. She had binoculars in her car and in several places in her home as well as a spotting scope. She loved opera and listened every Saturday to Maine Public Radio broadcasts of live performances at the Metropolitan Opera House. She was the kindest of people and never, ever said an ungenerous word about anyone, not even politicians.

Emily leaves behind a nephew, Jim Wick, of Shelburne, Vt., and four nieces, Laura Hallowell of Rockport, Louise (Dan) DeSantis of Somersworth, N.H.; and her children, Peter and Madeline, Emily W. Schaff of Youngstown, Ohio, and Anne Schaff of Portland, Maine, New Hampshire and a long list of friends.

ARRANGEMENTS: Emily's family is grateful for the superb and loving care of her helpers and nurses from North Shore PRN and Hospice of the North Shore. A memorial service with reception following will be held at 11 a.m. at the First Congregational Church of Rockport on April 20. Memorial contributions may be made to the Sandy Bay Yacht Club Sailing Program & Scholarship Fund Inc., or to Hospice of the North Shore.