



Virginia M. Carey

October 21, 1925 - March 20, 2019

Daughter, sister, wife, mother and friend, these hardly start to describe a person. Label, yes, but do not touch on what someone meant to us. What is remarkable is the life she led. Some may say ordinary but to us it was an example for us to try new things, explore and reach for a life well lived.

Virginia Mary Swartz was born in Streator, IL on October 21, 1925 to L. Bert and Cecil Swartz. She enjoyed music, learning the piano and playing the trombone in high school.

Virginia attended Illinois Wesleyan University, majoring in math and chemistry. She met Paul L. Carey there when he returned from serving in WW II. They participated in college life to the full - academics, dances, even acting in plays. Paul was in a fraternity, but Virginia was an independent. Paul wrote that Virginia was his greatest inspiration.

Paul and Virginia married in 1948 after graduating from IWU. They went on to Kansas State University where Paul would earn a master's degree, Virginia did too because... why not? It was something to do while Paul was busy.

In 1951, they welcomed their first child. Mom started to have her hands full as Paul and Virginia filled the family to five children. Life revolved around the kids. Dad pursued a PhD and Mom tended a garden, sewed clothes for the

kids and became a Scout Leader extraordinaire. She took the kids camping and on trips that included Washington DC, the Caribbean and Europe twice. Mom and Dad supported them as they went on their own personal journeys to Philmont Scout Ranch (New Mexico), National Center West (Wyoming), Cape Canaveral (to see Apollo 12 lift off), summer camps, wilderness survival and more.

As the kids moved out, she started new hobbies. Quilting and genealogy were favorites. Every child and grandchild (there are eight) eventually received a quilt. Virginia and Paul took trips to national quilt shows, to research genealogy, and sometimes both in one trip. They also went on a couple trips with the International Executive Service Corp. Or as Paul liked to say, the Paunch Corp. They went to Ecuador and Pakistan where she volunteered at an Ecuadorian hospital, visiting babies and getting mugged in Pakistan.

Virginia kept giving to others even while her world shrank around her. She continued to smile, say thank you, and show her appreciation for those caring for her, teaching others about dignity, giving and growth.

Virginia is survived by her five children, Dan, Beth, Brian, Barb and Patty. Her grandchildren, Sarah E., Scott, Bradley, Matthew, Sarah M., Melissa, Aaron, and Zachary, will remember her cookie jar, the tree they climbed, the biscuits (that no one can replicate) and countless other memories. She has four great grandchildren as well. Virginia's friends will recall how she helped whenever she could, be it quilting, Girl Scout cookie sales, church sales or just sharing.

In lieu of flowers memorial donations can be made to the Forrest Frank Student Research Fund Illinois Wesleyan University, P.O. Box 2900, Bloomington, Illinois 91701.

Tribute Wall



“ *Virginia M. Carey*

January 06, 2023 at 10:46 PM