



Audree Eugenia Raffay

August 31, 2018

Audree Eugenia Kuehne Raffay, beloved wife of the late Stephen J. Raffay, passed away peacefully on Friday August 31, 2018 with her family by her side.

Audree was born Jan. 30, 1930, daughter of the late George Berger Kuehne and Alice Minginovich Kuehne. As a child growing up in Montvale, NJ she asked her parents for piano lessons and showed an unusual talent after a few lessons. At age 12 she was invited to play on the program celebrating the 50th anniversary of the town of Montvale. She performed Rachmananov's Prelude in C# minor. The mayor sent her a letter stating "Montvale's proud of you and I wish you every success in your future musical career."

At the age of 14 her piano teacher decided she was ready for advanced studies and arranged an audition with well-known Russian concert pianist and teacher at Julliard, Alfred Mirovitch. He accepted her as a student and she began practicing 4 hours a day. After a year she played at Steinway Hall. Summers she studied theory and other courses at Julliard. She also played in a Julliard recital which was broadcasted on WNYC. Mirovitch wrote a letter to her high school principal for permission to attend school half days stating "Audree Kuehne is the possessor of a most pronounced talent for music, the piano in particular. She is endowed with a fine intelligence and an unusual capacity for painstaking work. I don't hesitate saying that she has every chance for a fine career in music."

At the age of 16, she became a student of the world famous Russian pedagogue, Isabella Vengerova.

After graduation from Park Ridge High School where Audree was voted "most talented", her family moved to NYC where she attended and graduated from Mannes College of Music. She served 5 years as organist and choir director at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Hillsdale, NJ.

John Marin, American watercolor artist and close family friend, was interested in her

playing and had her spend a summer vacation at his summer home in Maine where he painted his famous ocean scenes. Evenings after dinner he would have Audree play programs for his guests.

In 1953 Audree married Stephen J. Raffay in NYC at St. Ignatius Episcopal Church. They moved to West Hartford where Steve accepted a position with Emhart Corporation. Audree joined St. James Church in West Hartford as Chapel Organist for the youth choir, and the Hartford Symphony Auxiliary where she and her 2-piano partner of 35 years, Jane Bartlett, gave many piano recitals including at St. Joseph's College, and Hartt School.

She became a 40 year member of the Musical Club of Hartford, where she performed solo, 2-piano, and chamber music. For many years she served on E B Storrs Scholarship Committee (part of the Musical Club), accompanied a singing group "The Better Half Notes", and was a member of the Hartford Golf Club.

Raymond Hansen, chairman of the piano department at Hartt School and founder of "The Hartford Piano Society" asked Audree to continue his work with the Society after moving to Washington, D.C. For 11 years she brought international pianists to the Hartt School to give recitals and master classes for the students. Her purpose was to keep classical piano alive.

Audree enjoyed travel with her husband around the world including the Pacific Basin Countries, Australia, New Zealand, Turkey, Greece, Russia, Europe, Africa, and South America.

Audree will be lovingly remembered by her 3 children; Andrea Lynne Carson and Leslie Kuehne Raffay of West Hartford, CT, Stephen G. Raffay of LaJolla, CA, and 6 grandchildren; Leslie Allison Gravel and husband Andrew of Boston, MA, Seth, Anastasia, Brianna, Andrew, and Adam Carson; a nephew Andrew Pomeroy and great nephew Maxwell Pomeroy of Arvada, CO. and cousins in N.J.

A Memorial Service will be held at St. John's Episcopal Church in West Hartford on Sat. Oct. 20 at 11:00am.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to either The Musical Club of Hartford (Attn: Michelle Duffy 22 Kirkwood Road, West Hartford, CT 06117); The Hartford Symphony (Attn: Development Dept, 166 Capitol Ave. Hartford, CT 06106), or St. John's Episcopal Church (Attn: Parish Manager 679 Farmington Avenue West Hartford, CT

Events

OCT **Memorial Service** 11:00AM
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St. John's Episcopal Church
679 Farmington Ave., West Hartford, CT, US