



Barbara Hellenga

May 25, 2014

Barbara "Darby" Hellenga, 85, died at Avery Heights in Hartford on Sunday, May 25, 2014. She lived in Canton for over 50 years before moving to Hartford in 2011. She was born in Mexico City on January 5th, 1929, to Norman L. and Martha (Chase) Johnson; she grew up in Washington, D.C., along with her two younger sisters. She received a B.A. in sociology from the University of Michigan, where she met her husband, Paul D. Hellenga. They were married on April 7, 1951, traveled in Europe for a year and eventually moved to Canton in 1955. Her first job was as a survey researcher for the State of Connecticut; later on she worked as an accountant for Connecticut General and then Mount Sinai Hospital. She was very active in Canton's civic life. She served on the Board of Education, the Conservation Commission, and the Commission on Aging, where she initiated the town's Dial-a-Ride program. She sat on the Board of Directors of Gallery on the Green, and volunteered there as well. After retirement, she volunteered with AIDS Project Hartford, American Friends Service Committee and Real Art Ways. She has been an active member of the Unitarian Society of Hartford for many years. She continued her education well into her 60s, studying history and women's studies at Trinity College and Wesleyan University. She also worked and marched for peace, social justice, women's rights, and support for people with HIV/AIDS. She enjoyed jazz, blues, gardening, traveling, and the companionship of her dogs and cats. Barbara touched numerous people's lives as a friend, tutor, sponsor and mentor. She was a deeply attentive,

accepting listener and infused every conversation with humor and wisdom. She is survived by her daughter and son-in-law Susan and Frank Merritt (Easton, PA), daughter Dr. Kate Hellenga (San Francisco, CA), and daughter Margot Hellenga (East Wenatchee, WA); four grandchildren; ten great grandchildren; two great-great grandchildren; her sister, Susan J. Vogeler; six nieces and a nephew; dear friend Audrey Reinsmith; and her Siamese cat, Clyde. She was preceded in death by her husband, Paul D. Hellenga, her sister, Eunice J. Martin, and her grandson, Edward Lindquist. While memorial donations to any of Barbara's causes and organizations would be welcome, her family encourages readers to remember her through action: listen with an open mind, give freely of your time and energy, and speak up against injustice. And finally, as Barbara would often say (quoting Woody Guthrie), "Take it easy, but take it!" A celebration of Barbara's life will take place in late summer 2014. For more information or to share condolences, please email celebrate.barbara.hellenga@gmail.com.

Tribute Wall



“ *Barbara's second daughter is Margot Hellenga who was with her 24/7 in her final days. It is comforting to realize that she had this help and support. Barbara (Darby) was in good and trusted hands until her passing. -PBF*

Paul Bennett Falcon - January 15, 2024 at 06:44 PM