



Geraldine Marie Gunnels

March 13, 2017

Geraldine Marie (Bell) Gunnels, 89, of West Hartford, died March 13, 2017 at her home. She was born in Houlton, Maine on August 25, 1927 to Canadian parents, Arthur and Helen Bell. Although her father died in an accident before her birth, Gerry enjoyed a childhood filled with the love and friendship of her many aunts, uncles, and cousins in Maine and New Brunswick whom she remembered fondly throughout her life. Early in her youth, Gerry and her mother moved to Hartford, Connecticut, where she went on to attend Hartford Public High School. Although she was unable to attend college, learning was one of the greatest passions of Gerry's life. She was a voracious reader and became a self-taught expert on many subjects that interested her. Gerry loved discussing politics, current events and international news, and her lifelong love of learning was contagious to those around her. She was a great fan of British television comedies and mystery series and enjoyed cultivating beautiful flowers throughout her yard and in her home.

In the aftermath of World War II, Gerry began corresponding with Charles Gunnels, a sergeant in the Army Air Corps stationed in Germany. Gerry and Charles fell in love through the letters they wrote to one another as Charles served in Germany and Italy. When Charles returned from service in 1948, before even returning to his home in Georgia, he went immediately to Hartford to meet the beauty with whom he had been corresponding. Within months, Charles had proposed marriage and the two were wed on December 19, 1948

in Georgia.

Gerry and Charles raised their children while moving around the country for Charles' career before returning to West Hartford in 1968. Gerry worked at West Hartford Public Library, but her main focus throughout her life was her family. Gerry was a devoted wife and a loving mother. Her two sons and three grandchildren were her greatest pride and joy, and her husband was her dearest friend.

After their sons were grown, Gerry and Charles hosted several foreign exchange students whom they considered additional sons. Jurg Keller of Switzerland and his wife Sibylle were particularly special to Gerry and Charles. Their friendship remained a source of happiness for the rest of her life. Gerry also enjoyed a close relationship with her many West Hartford neighbors.

Gerry will be remembered with deep love by her husband of 68 years, Charles, her sons, Robert and Marc (Kaki), her grandchildren Laura (Adam) Aikens, Jennifer, and Brandon (Laura), her great-grandchildren Caroline and Charles Aikens and Bennett Gunnels, and her nieces and nephew, Nan Larsen, Karen Deakins, and John Bell. She was preceded in death by her parents, her brother and sister-in-law John and Anne (Gunnels) Bell, and her firstborn son, Brandon Charles Gunnels.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Gerry's memory to the Connecticut Humane Society.

Tribute Wall

LH

“Gerry Gunnels has been a warm and caring neighbor to me for over thirty years. With Gerry's passing and, as a result Charles relocation, our neighborhood is now a darker and gloomier place. She is very missed.
Laurie Anne Hokanson

Laurie Anne Hokanson - March 30, 2017 at 06:29 PM

LE

“For as long as I can remember; Gerry Gunnels was the epitome of graciousness, kindness and natural elegance. A true representative of the greatest generation. I know this loss is crushing for the entire family. The Elliotts all send our love.

Lola Elliott-Hugh - March 27, 2017 at 06:11 PM

PP

“I would like to express my deep sympathy for the loss of a very sweet lady. I have known her for many years and will miss her very much.
Piero Petraccone
Franks Tailor Shop.

Piero Petraccone - March 25, 2017 at 07:38 AM