



Victoria Dickinson

June 27, 1924 - February 15, 2023

Victoria Helen Dickinson passed away peacefully at age 98 on February 15, 2023, at Cedarbrook Senior Living Center in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. She is survived by four nieces, Susan Lock (Mark), Grosse Pointe Shores, MI, Carrie Nurmi, St. Clair Shores, MI, Ann Smith (Tom), Aurora, IL, and Donna Brook, Haslett, MI, as well as three nephews, Douglas Bell (Leslie), Rapid City, SD, David Bell (Peggy), Pinedale, WY, and Scott Bell (Susan), Canton, SD.

Our Aunt Vicki was born on June 27, 1924, in Norfolk, Nebraska to Victor E. and Lavone (Zurbrigen) Chilquist. Her Dad was a bridge contractor and her Mother was a secretary. However, with the onset of the Great Depression, in 1934 the family moved to a farm near Foster, Nebraska where her Dad raised registered Hereford cattle. Her Mother, as a secretary in Norfolk who had never lived on a farm, became a farm wife. In 1927, Vicki was joined by a sister, Jean. The Chilquist girls both attended high school in Norfolk, Nebraska, taking the train from Foster to Norfolk a distance of about 23 miles. They boarded with friends in Norfolk and came home each weekend. Vicki graduated first in her class at Norfolk High School in 1942 and because of her love of Chemistry, enrolled at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln in the College of Pharmacy. Initially, there were 30 men and two other women in her class. In 1946, she graduated first, and last, in her class at the College of Pharmacy - all the men had been called off to the war and the other women had dropped out.

While at the University of Nebraska, she often attended the USO dances at the Lincoln Army Air Base, one of many training bases across the country that trained airmen for the war. There, she met George South, who was from upper Michigan. After graduation in 1946, she was married to George South and the couple moved to Detroit, Michigan. She was hired as a pharmacist at J.L. Hudson department store in downtown Detroit, the second woman hired into that department. Fifty years later in an interview with the University of Nebraska Foundation, she stated that discrimination was quite prevalent among male customers as well as the male staff at Hudson's, as women were not supposed to have careers. Nothing however dimmed her enthusiasm as she truly loved pharmacy. After about ten years at Hudson's, she moved over to the pharmacy department at the Hutzel Women's Hospital, and eventually became the assistant director before retiring in 1983.

In 1963 Vicki married R.C. "Cliff" Dickinson who lived across the street from her in Royal Oak. Vicki described him as "the kindest man I ever knew." They had 25 wonderful years together before Cliff passed away in 1988. With the help of some wonderful friends she filled the emptiness in her life with friends, travel and volunteerism. During her lifetime, before and after Cliff's passing, she traveled all over the world, eventually visiting every continent except South America and Antarctica. She and Cliff had developed many wonderful friendships that continued to support her after Cliff passed away. In later years, the children of some of these wonderful friends became her closest friends who loved and cared for her in her later years.

In her retirement years, volunteerism became a hallmark of her life. She became involved in the Volunteer Service Committee at William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, eventually becoming President of the organization for a number of years, coordinating over one thousand volunteers. She accumulated over 8,000 volunteer hours at Beaumont Hospital,

continuing to volunteer her time well into her 90's. She finally gave up full-time volunteer service at Beaumont when she was no longer able to drive at age 94. Even after giving up driving, she was occasionally picked up by other volunteers to help out. That level of dedication and commitment were trademarks throughout her life.

Another passion of Vicki's was education. She was continually encouraging young people, particularly those in tough circumstances, to continue their education to better their circumstances. This passion was expressed in her volunteer service for the library at her church, First Presbyterian Church in Royal Oak, as well as the Royal Oak Public Library. For many years Vicki served on the Board of Trustees of the Royal Oak Public Library, serving as its President when the library was in desperate need to firm up its funding sources. In 2002 and 2003, she chaired the Millage Campaign Committee voter education effort to ensure passage of a measure to provide a separate mill levy to support funding of the library. Once passed, this provided funding for a major renovation of the library. She believed that no city was a worthy place for its citizens unless it actively supported its public library and encouraged its citizens to constantly broaden their horizons through the resources of the library. A picture appeared in the paper of Vicki, at age 79, manning the information booth outside the library encouraging voters to support the library. That's dedication!

Another lasting hallmark of her life was her love for and dedication to her family. Although she was not able to have children, she loved her nieces and nephews. A birthday or Christmas never went by without a card or letter from Vicki, always offering encouragement and her love.

These things are the legacy of this remarkable lady, love of family, the life-long benefits of a solid education and giving through volunteerism.

Even though Vicki had not lived in Nebraska since 1946, she was still a tried and true supporter of all things Nebraska, particularly the Nebraska Cornhusker football team. Through all the ups and downs of the Huskers, she was a loyal but humble supporter of the program. After the Huskers had joined the Big 10 Conference, friends invited her to the first game in which Nebraska played Michigan in Ann Arbor. True to her loyalty, she was dressed all in Scarlet and Cream, even though sitting amidst the Michigan alumni! Go Big Red!

Vicki was pre-deceased by her parents, Victor E. and Lavone (Zurbrigen) Chilquist, her husband, R.C. "Cliff" Dickinson, her sister, Jean L. Bell, brother-in-law, James G. Bell, and brother-in-law, Dave Dickinson. She is survived by her nieces and nephews, her brother-in-law, Al Dickinson of Grosse Pointe Woods, MI, and many grand nieces and grand nephews.

A memorial service will be held for Vicki on April 26, 2023 at 10:00 a.m. at the First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak, 529 Hendrie Blvd., Royal Oak. A private family gathering will follow at 2:00 p.m. at Acacia Park Cemetery. Memorial gifts may be made to the Victor and Lavone Chilquist Pharmacy Scholarship Fund, #01138060, University of Nebraska Foundation, 1010 Lincoln Mall, Suite 300, Lincoln, NE 68508.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

APR **26**. 10:00 AM (ET)

First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak
529 Hendrie Boulevard
Royal Oak, MI 48067

Tribute Wall

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“ *We at the Royal Oak Public Library are grateful for her service to the Library and the community. We are truly sorry for her loss.* ”

Sandy Irwin - March 06, 2023 at 12:42 PM