



Marjorie Bennison

July 27, 1917 - January 21, 2019

As her husband left for a meeting in 1974 where he and other bishops of the Episcopal Church were to consider the ordination of women, Marjorie Bennison warned him of consequences back home if he were not to change his mind and vote yes. He voted yes.

Raised the granddaughter of Swedish and Norwegian immigrants in Minnesota at a time when Anglo-Americans dominated the state's political and economic interests, Marjorie spent her life in the majority community quietly but persistently advocating for minorities. She was still negotiating the feelings complicated by her background when at 101 years of age she died peacefully on January 21, 2019, at Cordia, a senior residential club in Traverse City, Michigan.

Marjorie Elizabeth Haglun was born on July 27, 1917, in Superior, Wisconsin. She spent her early years in Duluth, Minnesota, before her family moved to Minneapolis where her father, John Arthur Haglun, prospered as a trader on the grain exchange until the Depression erased the family's fortunes and necessitated her transfer from a private school to Washburn High School. Her mother Sophie (Johnson) was a homemaker.

While living at home she attended the University of Minnesota, graduating with a degree in art history in 1939. She set aside her aspiration to become an architect in order to marry Charles Bennison, whom she had first met at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Minneapolis, when both were five years of age. Her parents had let her walk to St. Luke's because its worship was in English, while their church's liturgy was in Swedish. The two married on June 16, 1942, following his ordination. She fully supported her husband in his ministries as a parish priest in Hastings, Minnesota, Joliet, Illinois, and Kalamazoo, Michigan, and as bishop of the Episcopal diocese of Western Michigan for twenty-five years. Following her husband's retirement in 1985 she lived in Claremont and Menlo Park, California, and, after his death in 2004, in Monterey, California, and Leland, Michigan. She had a lifelong interest in art and architecture, enjoyed drawing and painting, and was an avid reader and lively interlocutor.

She is survived by her children Charles Bennison, Jr. (Joan) of Philadelphia, Mary Fleishman (Michael) of Leland, and John Bennison (Germaine) of Walnut Creek, California, six grandchildren, and eleven great-grandchildren. Her sister Kathryn preceded her in death. Her family will inter her cremains beside her husband's this summer in the Resurrection Garden of the onetime Episcopal cathedral in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Memorial donations may be made to Leelanau Christian Neighbors, PO Box 196, Lake Leelanau, Michigan 49653.

The family is being served by the Reynolds Jonkhoff Funeral Home

Comments



“ Today for some reason I thought of my mother’s friend Marjorie and found a photo of this beautiful person attached to her obituary. She and the entire Bennison family were big players in our lives in Kalamazoo. What a blessing she was able to enjoy so many years. Much love to all, Martha Schaberg Purmalis.

Martha Purmalis - April 21, 2019 at 03:32 PM