



## Onalee Balyeat

April 17, 2011

TRAVERSE CITY — Onalee Maxine Balyeat, 93, passed away April 17, 2011, in a gentle dream on her life's journey. Onalee is survived by her loving and devoted husband, Phil, who today honors the treasured 69-year marriage they shared as true soul-mates. She is also survived by her daughter, Barbara; son, Steven; nieces Linda and Mary "MJ"; and extended family. Onalee was preceded in death by her gentle and insightful daughter, Wendy; parents, Nellie and Elen Calkins; sisters, Eleanor Stewart and Theo Ashmore. Two nephews, John and Kent, died during the Vietnam War. Onalee grew up and worked in Traverse City. One beautiful and sunny summer day, she met a young man named Phil on the beach in Traverse City, who was teaching swimming and life-saving. Before he rushed into the water to successfully save a young boy, he asked Onalee to hold his watch. Shortly after marrying in 1941, Phil was called into service in World War II with the V-5 Naval Aviation program, reporting to the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md. With his new wife at his side, the young officer was first stationed in Iowa City, when Norman, Okla., where their daughters were born. Duty took them to Jacksonville Naval Air Station and the Ft. Lauderdale Naval Air Station, where Phil was Athletic Officer until the end of the war. They then chose to raise their family in Traverse City. They changed professions from teaching and coaching to photography. In 1950, they opened with pride The Camera Shop, which remains in downtown Traverse City today. Through the shop, Phil and Onalee provided the region with lovely picture-making memories for whole families and their friends. In 1955, they were blessed with the birth of their son, Steve (now in business in Surry, Maine). He joined in those memories that included summers at their cottage in Bowers Harbor and their condo in Pompano Beach, Fla. Onalee will live on, in our memory, as a beautiful, cherished wife, mother, homemaker of beautiful prom dresses, and "weaver of special memories." She has rejoiced with her devoted 1936 Central High School classmates through the years, attended her class reunions until this past year and enjoyed her 9-hole golf experiences in Traverse City. She put her hand to delicate and lovely watercolor paintings, as she did to making a loving home for us all. The family would like to extend its heartfelt appreciation to the very recent care provided by the staff of Tendercare-Birchwood, Hospice of Michigan, the Commission on Aging, Comfort Keepers, and her personal doctor, Dr. Anessa Songer, as well as treasured family friends (and

dogs). In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be directed to Hospice of Michigan, the Commission on Aging or Comfort Keepers. Friends are invited to meet with the family at the funeral home for visitation from 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesday, April 20, with a prayer for Onalee at 7 p.m. and memories by friends and family. Cremation has been chosen and arrangements have been entrusted to Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral Home.