



## Mrs. Elizabeth Garrett Hayes

January 6, 1924 - November 30, 2019

Elizabeth Garrett Hayes, known to her many friends and family as “Libby”, died peacefully in her sleep on Saturday, November 30, 2019, at the Morningside House, Parkville, MD. She was 95 years old.

Libby’s husband of 73 years, James Stoddard Hayes (“Jim”), predeceased her by just over four months. Libby is survived by her children, James Stoddard Hayes, Jr., of Joppa, MD, Katharine Hayes Armitage, of Brixham, England, and Curtis Woods Hayes, of Midlothian, VA, six grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren.

Libby was the youngest child of Albert and Ethel Garrett of Swarthmore, PA. A Quaker by birth, she grew up attending meeting at the Swarthmore Friends Meeting. She briefly attended the Westtown School, but illness forced her to leave and she graduated from Swarthmore High School with the Class of 1942. After high school, she earned an AB Degree from Bradford Junior College and was trained as an executive secretary at the Katharine Gibbs College in Providence, Rhode Island.

She and Jim were married on June 1, 1946, after Jim returned from serving in the Pacific Theater in World War II, in a Quaker ceremony at the Swarthmore Friends Meeting. Libby and family lived all over the United States, in Southeast Asia and the United Kingdom. On average, they moved to a new home once every one and a half years. While this was not at all what Libby was accustomed to growing up (her parents lived in the same house from the time she was born until her father’s death in 1967), she became adept at making a new house into a home for her family, wall papering, painting, putting up curtains, hanging pictures, and arranging furniture. Whenever she moved to a new location, she was quick to make friends and become a part of her new community. She loved being a hostess, made many friends and always kept in touch.

Throughout her life, Libby was an accomplished athlete. As a teenager, she played varsity lacrosse and field hockey and was a member of Swarthmore High School’s multi-year undefeated “dream team” of the early 1940s. Later, her interests turned to tennis and golf

and, when her travels took her to distant places, she played golf in such exotic locales as St. Andrews in Scotland and the Royal Bangkok Sports Club, in Bangkok, Thailand. She continued to play golf and tennis into her 80s, often competing in tournaments at her home in The Dunes on Sanibel Island, Florida.

Libby was a great competitor, not only at sports, but in everything she did. She loved to play Bridge and was a formidable duplicate player. Even in non-competitive activities, there were no half-efforts. She pushed herself to achieve and surpass milestones that she would set for herself.

Libby loved to act and, beginning in high school, performed wherever and whenever she could find an audience. In her early 20s, she was often cast in lead roles as the ingenue. She was a member of the Swarthmore Players Club and performed in several of its productions in the 40s, including the role of Sally Middleton in John Van Druten's *The Voice of the Turtle*, subsequently made into a film starring Ronald Reagan in the male lead and Eve Arden as Sally Middleton. Later, she performed more mature leads, including that of the tortured Bella Manningham in Patrick Hamilton's *Angel Street* (*Gaslight*), for the Player's Society in Watertown, New York. In later life, even as her body began to fail her, she took delight in regaling her care-givers with lines from plays long-forgotten and songs from musicals of the 40s and 50s.

Like her mother before her, Libby enjoyed painting. She was prolific, especially later in life. Early water colors from her many hours snow-bound in a Quonset hut in Appleton, Wisconsin, eventually turned to oil paintings composed on the deck of their home overlooking a waterhole at The Dunes, or her studio in their house in Bronxville, New York.

Always active, Libby worked as a volunteer for many causes. During WWII, she volunteered as a "candy-striper" in Philadelphia area hospitals caring for injured soldiers and sailors who had been shipped stateside, often with severe debilitating psychological injuries. There, she met the then-unknown comedian, Jonathan Winters, who is reputed to have proposed marriage to her, although Libby refused, finding him somewhat "odd." (Libby's children viewed this particular story with a certain level of skepticism until Mr. Winters called and spoke to one of her sons whilst in Bangkok performing for the USO in 1967).

In Bangkok, where they lived while Jim was building a paper factory 50km east of the city, Libby volunteered to teach English at a girls normal school. This was at a time — 1966-1970 — when most Americans in Bangkok were GIs recuperating from combat in the War in Vietnam. Although she spoke very little Thai and could not write or read the language,

her students adored her. Her renditions of Inky Dinky Spider charmed many of the young children and helped them view Americans as kind, generous people. When she left, her students gave her a testimonial plaque (“Mrs. Hayes — Thank you for your patients (sic)”), signed by each student, which she treasured the rest of her life and displayed in a prominent location in every house in which she lived thereafter.

Libby survived her husband, all six of her siblings and their spouses, both Jim’s siblings and their spouses, and most of her friends. Yet, with her memory failing and confined to a wheel chair, she still loved a good party. Despite her challenges, she was almost always positive and happy. Her children will always remember her renditions of I Love You Truly, sung slightly off-key, but with great gusto.

Her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and other relatives, friends and acquaintances will miss her dearly, but take solace in the knowledge that she is once again keeping the company of her beloved Jim.

Libby will be remembered at a Memorial Service in the spring, at a time and date yet to be determined. For further information, contact her son, Tod, at [tod@nanasasufarm.com](mailto:tod@nanasasufarm.com).

# Comments

---



“ What a wonderful obituary; I learned things about her life that I didn't know! I will always remember Aunt Libby with a lot of love.

One memory that comes to mind in particular is that she and Uncle Jim not only came all the way to Colorado for my wedding, but carried a very large box, which contained their gift for Dan and me, WITH them. It was a full set of Revere Ware copper bottom pots -- including a 6-quart, all of which we still have and use regularly! I often think of them as I handle and cook with these wonderful pots.

I also remember that when they spent a few days here in Fort Collins, during the time of our wedding, they played on our City Park golf course. Afterwards, when Aunt Libby told me enthusiastically, "You have a very nice course," that meant a lot coming from her (with so much experience golfing), and made me happy that they'd enjoyed it!

It's sad for all of us in the next generation to say goodbye. In just the last few years we've lost my mom, Kathy, and her two brothers John and Jim Hayes, and now the last of their spouses.

We'll miss you, Aunt Libby, and will rememberer and appreciate your bright spirit always.

Love from Kitty/ Katharine Porter Gregory



Katharine Porter Gregory - January 07 at 03:19 PM

---



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Chris Hussey - January 06 at 04:13 PM