



## Mrs. Patricia Pruett Onnen

January 6, 1926 - November 25, 2020

Patricia P. Onnen, a former model with deep Southern Maryland ancestry, died peacefully Wednesday at her Cockeysville home, the former Ruxton resident was 94 years old.

Born Patricia Edwina Pruett in Baltimore, Mrs. Onnen was the oldest daughter of R. Edwin Pruett, a longtime printer with the Baltimore Sun, and his wife, the former Anna Alberta Bowles of St. Mary's County. Raised at intervals at the St. Mary's County farm of her maternal grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Daniel J. Bowles, Jr., of Loveville, Mrs. Onnen was particularly proud of her grandfather Bowles' veterinary career as well as the fact that he was elected Sheriff of St. Mary's County in 1916, 1920, and 1942. Upon her grandfather's death in 1971 at the age of 101, the Maryland Senate passed a resolution expressing sympathy on his passing stating in part that he "exemplified all the finest traditions of St. Mary's County, Southern Maryland, and the State of Maryland."

Mrs. Onnen attended boarding school at the all-girls St. Mary's Academy in Leonardtown, Maryland through 8th grade before going on to graduate from Seton High School in Baltimore in 1944. Later that year, Mrs. Onnen began the study of nursing at Mercy Hospital in Baltimore and entered the United States Cadet Nurse Corps. Upon leaving the field of nursing, Mrs. Onnen enrolled in the Barbizon Modeling School in Manhattan, and following a career

with Powers Models in New York, Mrs. Onnen returned to Baltimore where she modeled for Hutzler's Tea Room and Schleisner Company Department Store in Baltimore, as well as Garfinckel's Department Store in Washington, D.C.

During her modeling career Mrs. Onnen met her husband, Ferdinand Henry Onnen, Sr., and the couple were married at Immaculate Conception Church in Towson followed by a reception at Baltimore Country Club in August of 1950. Mr. Onnen, a highly decorated lieutenant colonel with the Army Air Corps during World War II, was the founder and longtime owner Towson Ford, as well as a prominent Baltimore County businessman, real estate investor and civic leader.

Immediately following their marriage Mr. and Mrs. Onnen resided on Dulaney Valley Road in Towson until 1954 when they purchased their historic home in Ruxton on Circle Road where the couple raised their six children in a house that was first built in the late 1880s by prominent Baltimore iron merchant and railroad president, R. Curzon Hoffman. Hoffman, who used the residence as a summer home, named it "Kedleston" after his family's ancestral estate in Derbyshire, England. The house was later expanded, and following her husband's death in October 1981, Mrs. Onnen continued living in the eight-bedroom home where she entertained and hosted countless family gatherings until 2014 when she moved to Cockeysville to live with one of her five daughters.

A proud descendant of many English Catholics who settled in St. Mary's County early in the 17th century when the colony was still friendly to those fleeing religious persecution in England, Mrs. Onnen's St. Mary's County antecedents included the Bowles, Spalding, Mattingly, Hayden, Graves, Knott, Joy, Greenwell, Cole, Carbery and Ford families. Also descended from George Calvert, 1st Lord Baltimore, Mrs. Onnen was an active member of a

variety of hereditary organizations including the Society of the Ark and the Dove, and served as President of the Fort Garrison Chapter of the National Society Colonial Dames 17th Century, and as President of the Mary Pickersgill Chapter of the United States Daughters of 1812. She was a former Regent of the Thomas Johnson Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Beyond her love of family history, Mrs. Onnen had a passion for travel, a hobby she first undertook with her husband, and later enjoyed with several of her daughters. Mrs. Onnen's travels took her to many countries in Europe, and the Caribbean, as well as Australia, New Zealand, South America, and Asia. She also enjoyed spending time at her homes in Fort Lauderdale, Florida and Ocean City, Maryland. A longtime member of the Baltimore Country Club where she enjoyed golf, Mrs. Onnen was also an active member of the Women's Club of Roland Park, the Three Arts Club of Homeland, and the Catholic Evidence League. In later years, Mrs. Onnen enjoyed art and antique collecting as well as bird watching.

Survivors include a son, Ferdinand H. Onnen, Jr., of Lutherville, and four daughters, Christine Onnen Diffenderffer of Ruxton, Lisa Onnen Barber and Joanna Onnen Porter both of Monkton, and Gretchen Onnen Milchling of Cockeysville; a brother, Daniel E. Ellis of Baltimore, and a sister, Winifred A. Dalrymple of Chico, California; 15 grandchildren, and 8 great-grandchildren. She was predeceased by her husband, and one daughter, Patricia Ann Onnen, and a sister, Joyce P. Vogelsang.

On November 25, 2020, Patricia Pruettt Onnen, beloved wife of the late Ferdinand H. Onnen, Sr., dear mother of Ferdinand H. Onnen, Jr. (Corinne), Christine O. Diffenderffer (R.B.), Lisa O. Barber (the late Scott), Gretchen O. Milchling (David), Joanna O. Porter (Martin), and the late Patrica Ann Onnen; loving grandmother of Ferdinand H. Onnen III (Catherine), Daniel Bowles

Smith (Amber), Catherine O. Chasen (Brandon), Claude A. Diffenderffer IV (Anne), Dietrich P. Onnen (Bridgette), Christine O. Diffenderffer, Brigid Patricia Milchling, Susan B. Diffenderffer, G. Mattingly Milchling, Mary R. Diffenderffer, David F. Milchling, Rose Marie B. Porter, Reagan T. Milchling, Hans O. Milchling and Sarah M. Porter; adoring great-grandmother of Carter D. Smith, Morgan M. Smith, Brandon M. Chasen, Jr., Brooks F. Chasen, Bowles L. Chasen, Virginia L. Onnen, Dietrich P. Onnen, Jr., and Baron O. Chasen; devoted sister of Daniel E. Ellis, of Baltimore, Winifred A. Dalrymple of Chico, California, and the late Joyce P. Vogelsang.

A Funeral Mass and interment will be private.

Please omit flowers. Memorials in her name may be made to Immaculate Conception Church 200 Ware Ave. Towson, MD 21204.

# Cemetery Details

## **Dulaney Valley Memorial Gardens**

200 E. Padonia Road  
Timonium, MD 21093  
<http://www.dulaneyvalley.com>

# Tribute Wall

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“ *Please accept my heartfelt condolence.* ”



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**Terry Morrill Silvano** - December 01, 2020 at 11:03 PM