



Mrs. Patricia Watts Whitehead

May 13, 2023

Our beloved mother Patricia Watts Whitehead passed away on May 13, 2023 in Mount Airy, Maryland, at the age of 92. Born in New York City during the Great Depression, she was raised in the city and on Long Island. Her father, Col. Edgerton Merrill, served in WWI and WWII, and her mother, Helen T. Merrill, a graduate of The Cooper Union, drew newspaper fashion plates in the 1920s and later became a realtor in N.Y.C.

Mom was educated at the Emma Willard School in Troy, New York, where she distinguished herself as a Latin scholar. She went on to study a year at Vassar College, but when money ran out, she joined Time Inc. as a researcher before later moving to Chicago where she met and married a young advertising executive, Thomas F. Whitehead. Together they had five daughters before moving with the girls first to Westport and then to Riverside, Connecticut.

Mom was smart, independent, and had a wonderful sense of humor and ability to laugh at herself. Education was always paramount to her, and she never wavered in trying to ensure her daughters were prepared as well as possible academically and saw that rewarded when all were able to go on to excellent colleges and to pursue their chosen careers.

She was a passionate dog lover who raised a succession of enormous Great Danes, boxers, and bull mastiffs over the years. A gentlewoman in every way,

she also had a firm belief in not wasting time complaining about the vicissitudes of life. Faced with a setback, she believed one should just “get on with it” and figure out a way to move forward.

She preached the values of hard work and doing your best no matter what the task (ambitious or mundane) and set the example, generally getting up at 5 a.m. to start her chores: she mowed lawns, clipped hedges, pruned gardens, and mobilized the family for marathon leaf-raking sessions during the fall. When she wanted to expand the family income, she produced international business and banking newsletters, teaching herself the production process along the way, and continued for years as a freelance writer.

Mom was always busy, always moving on to the next task, except when she was indulging her incredibly eclectic taste in reading or her love of old Hollywood movies; walking the dogs or visiting with family. She was a warm presence for four sons-in-law and one daughter-in-law and a delightful grandmother. Well into her 80s and 90s, Mom would enthusiastically engage with her grandchildren with their widely different ages and interests, whether playing with Transformers and Lego bricks; discussing geopolitics, books and film history; or encouraging them all as they shared their future goals and aspirations.

Determined to stay connected, she operated her own social media accounts and migrated to become a regular Facetime user to stay in touch with family.

Mom leaves behind her daughters Trish, Julia, Kathy, Liz and Helen and their spouses as well as an ever-growing circle of grandchildren and great-grandchildren. We loved her very much and feel fortunate to have had her with us for so many years and to have warm memories of her to lighten our way ahead.

In lieu of flowers, the family would be grateful if donations were sent to <https://caninehumane.org>