

Mom (for memorial celebration)

I'm going to concentrate on the public Margaret Smagorinsky today. It's a little funny to think of Mom as a public person, because she was in many ways very shy. But, typical of her, she didn't let her fears get in her way. As those of you who knew her remember, she brought her full arsenal of wit, inventiveness, generosity and thoughtfulness to her relationships outside our family. I'm going to touch on just a few of those types of interactions.

The famous car rally. It takes a rare combination of navigational skills, knowledge of a geographical area, preparation, skill at doggerel, and spunk to plan and execute the type of car rally my mother was famous for. The routes were circuitous, the rhyming directions were inscrutable, and the tasks required were hilarious. If there is anyone else in this country who puts together events like Mom's car rally, I've never heard about it. What I have heard is people reliving those events over and over, till they've almost passed into mythology. And I'm sure the people at the small local store who were over-run by ralliers looking for canned sardines one year will never forget her either!

The mother hen of GFDL. If my father was the patriarchal figure of the Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Lab, my mother was the nurturer of countless new lab families, including many foreign families in the US for the first time. The lab attracted a number of prominent (or soon-to-be-prominent) scientists from around the world, and their families were often completely new to all things American. Starting with the very first families in the 50's, Mom made it her job to take these people (generally the wives) under her wing. Whether in Washington or Princeton, she devoted herself to befriending these newcomers, helping them acclimate to their new surroundings and culture, leading tours of the area, and of course hosting her famous parties, dinner and otherwise. Partly this stemmed from Mom's fascination with other countries and their people and customs, and partly just her sense of responsibility for all these newbies.

We have received so many thoughtful notes and emails from people who knew Mom, and many of them included anecdotes about GFDL families who received the Margaret Smagorinsky welcome. Harriet Bryan, whose husband Kirk was at GFDL for some 50 years, remembers "Your mother's social events made us feel at home in a strange city and for us a new part of the country, coping with the joys and anxieties of raising young children. Your mother was always very helpful with encouragement and common sense advice. The lab had a rich diversity of people from just about every country. Concerned about the wives of these foreign members of the staff, Margaret started a monthly get together. She would lead wives to a museum, or, once all the museums in Washington had been visited, she led them outside of town to historical mansions, and once to a fossil site along the Potomac. I remember these trips with great pleasure. It was a wonderful way to get to know everyone. Your mother enjoyed this diversity."

Janet and Gareth Williams wrote, "Margaret made an incredible contribution to the lives of all the young, often foreign, scientists and their families by welcoming us all to your

home so frequently and arranging interesting outings for the spouses, particularly during the Washington years but continuing on as we moved to Princeton. Together with Joe she created a true feeling that GFDL was like an extended family for us all, and helped make the transition to life in America easier than it would have been otherwise."

The mother hen to Princeton students. Fred and I got to share Mom in a special way during our years as college students across the street. We both have legions of former roommates and friends who regarded 21 Duffield Place as their home-away-from-home during their college years. I had dinner with a former roommate and lifelong friend a few nights ago, and she remembered being a trepidacious Southern girl who found a welcoming home around Mom's kitchen table, where she learned that smart, educated Northerners could also be warm, funny, unpretentious and endlessly fascinating. Some of Mom's Princeton undergraduate fledglings are here today to honor her generosity.

The author. Mom's interest in writing went back to her school days, when she was on her high school literary magazine. From car rally clues to crossword puzzles to indignant letters of complaint to all manner of companies, Mom reveled in the love of words and words well-expressed. So it was only natural that, at the youthful age of 75, she would try her hand at writing longer works. Margaret authored a series of pamphlets (which we have out in the other room) about subjects pertaining to her beloved Princeton University and the campus. These works are still sold at the Princeton Art Museum, Princeton University Store, and can even be found on Amazon! They are written with Mom's famous love of original-source research and her one-of-a-kind dry humor.

The volunteer. When we were young, finding the time for volunteer work was time that a hands-on mother of five simply didn't have. But after we moved to Princeton in 1968, Margaret started giving her time to the University League, which she served as board member, president and long-time organizer of the Furniture Exchange. Just as she loved welcoming newcomers to the GFDL family, Mom loved welcoming newcomers to the Princeton University community. Much of her work was behind-the-scenes organizing, but she was also quite famous for her campus tours on behalf of the League, and her gargoyles tours, highlighting the many and diverse gargoyles and grotesques on the Princeton campus, were legendary.

Landon Jones, a friend and neighbor of our parents, recently noted Mom's death by saying that we had lost a real Princeton presence, one who had lived life to the full. I'm not even going to try to add to that appreciation. She will be truly missed.