



Ruth McNeil

June 30, 1916 - May 31, 2011

Ruth McNeil was called home today. She passed away as quietly as she lived, with great strength and dignity at the Neighborhood Hospice in West Chester, PA. She will be missed by her family and friends, and remembered for being a caregiver to so many. Born in Yatesboro, PA in 1916, she was never supposed to live. Ruth was born prematurely and her mom was told to prepare for her death, as the doctor had never seen a baby that small ever survive. But survive she did, and what a life she lived! She was always independent, believing that we are all here to create and to make the world a little bit better than we found it. Her earliest memories were of farm life, coal mines, close family ties, and Polish seasonal celebrations. When her dad became ill from working in the mines, the family moved to Youngstown, Ohio and began anew. Ruth left her family early, at the age of 14, and went to live with her cousin in Chicago. She worked in a number of positions and sent money back to her family to help with expenses. Her desire from as far back as she could remember was to be a nurse, a desire she achieved after graduating from Loyola University in Chicago with a BSN. While tending to her dad, who died at home, she frequently recalled that he told her that her hands were very special. "You have a great gift," he said, "You need to share this with others." Ruth also lived through the Great Depression. She often talked about how daily difficulties served to temper her resolve and teach her the values of thrift, compassion, and cooperating with others. When World War II broke out, Ruth joined the Army Nurse Corps and quickly was promoted to

First Lieutenant. Her job was to supervise the transfer of our wounded soldiers back to their home towns. Often she flew in converted DC3's, nursing severely wounded soldiers on their flights back to their loved ones. These planes were not pressurized and they could not fly above 12,000 feet. She described the bumpy flights as a combination of sadness and gratitude with a dose of terror thrown in from the turbulence. Ruth met the love of her life, Ted, a logistics Sergeant under General Patton, while he was wounded and in the hospital. They married soon after the war. She and Ted had two sons together. All the while she continued her nursing career, holding positions at Coney Island Hospital, Long Island Jewish Hospital, and Mercy Hospital on Long Island. The bulk of her working life was spent administering the Emergency Rooms, and she became known for pioneering the triage process we have today. Once, when asked to talk about her career in nursing, she said to her students, "It's not about caring for and managing your career that matters, it's understanding who you are and what you are called to do." After her husband passed away, Ruth moved back to Youngstown, Ohio and began another active phase of her life, reconnecting with her brothers and sisters. In retirement, Ruth worked as a care giver assisting physicians during surgery and in several nursing homes before hanging up her stethoscope when she felt she could no longer deliver the quality of care her standards demanded. She travelled extensively, visiting New Zealand and Australia to see her son, her daughter-in-law, and her granddaughters. For the last 17 years she lived quietly in East Vincent, PA with her oldest son and his family, tending to family life, and helping to raise her granddaughter. She was a life-long Democrat and never missed an election. Ruth had a strong belief in God. A devoted Catholic, she was a staunch believer in helping the poor and in giving back to one's community. In her later years she became connected to the Padre Pio shrine on Route 100. Ruth is survived by one sister Helen, her two sons, Robert and Kenneth, their wives Christine and Susan, and her grand children Kelly-Rose, Jessica, and Rachel. Services will be private. Ruth will be buried with military honors at Long Island National Cemetery in NYC. In lieu of

flowers, contributions can be made to The Phoenixville Free Clinic (<http://www.theclinicpa.org/>) in her name.

Tribute Wall

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“ To the Family, We are always saddened by the passing of our dear loved one. The time we have with them is never enough. Please keep in your hearts and minds the wonderful joy and happiness they brought to your lives. Even though it is hard for us to imagine the void in our lives be assured of this period as resting time for them. Hope is given to us through the scriptures that this enemy called "Death" will soon be done away with. (1 Cor. 15:26) Not only will death be no more, neither will sickness, pain and sorrow be anymore. (Rev. 21:3-4) God has said "He is making all things new". My prayers are with you all. Agape' Smith Family

Smith Family - July 19, 2013 at 08:35 AM