



Heather Hawdon O'Malley

March 24, 1923 - January 16, 2015

Heather O'Malley, of Ferndale, died on Friday, January 16, 2015 at home, following complications from a long life, well lived.

Heather was born Heather Hawdon Robertson, in Rockhampton, Australia, on March 24, 1923. Her parents were William M. Robertson and Muriel Robertson (nee Chambers). She attended Clayfield College, Brisbane, receiving her first degree in piano performance from Trinity School of Music, London/ Brisbane, specializing in Chopin. Music and sports, notably tennis, were her passions, and she was a champion amateur tennis player in Queensland during her teens.

She married Lee O'Malley in Sydney, Australia in 1948, and they settled initially in Sydney, where Lee was a radio and stage actor, and Heather a secretary at the Australia Broadcasting Company. In 1949 their son Leigh was born. By 1956 they had moved to the US, to Torrance, California, and had their second child, Elizabeth. She and Lee moved to Brea, California in 1959, where she organized her life around raising their children.

Heather was a life-long learner and teacher. She and Lee lived for 40 years in Southern California, shuttling between Brea and Landers, in the high desert, where they had 5 acres and a beloved weekend cabin, which grew into a house over the years. In Brea, she taught a generation of piano students, and

studied for her MA in music pedagogy at California State University, Fullerton. At first 'snowbirds', travelling to Orcas Island in the Puget Sound in the summers, they began to spend more and more time in Washington state, and by 1995 were permanent residents on Orcas Island. Everywhere she lived she belonged to the local garden club, enjoyed fishing and the out-of-doors; and, she and Lee maintained a focus on travel, visiting Europe, Australia, and Africa, as well as many parts of North America.

In Washington, Heather began to study to be a Master Gardener at Western Washington University, and was certified as such by the state agriculture extension service. Over the years she also studied landscape architecture, painting, ceramics, travel logistics, German language, and was a regular at Elder Hostel. But, her passions were always music and travel (and food); loves which she passed on to her children and grandchildren.

In 2002, Lee and Heather moved off Orcas Island and into the Willows, in Bellingham. After Lee's death in 2004, Heather stayed on at the Willows until 2009, when she moved to Lee Manor, an adult family home in Ferndale, under the care of Annetta and Kevin Lee. Heather was a long-time member of Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Eastsound, where she sang in the choir as well as coordinating and taking part in numerous musical events over the years. More recently, she worshiped at First Congregational Church in Bellingham.

Heather leaves behind her brother Duncan Robertson with Barbara, of Mackay and Melbourne, Australia, and brother-in-law Angus Hutton of Gympie, Australia, son Leigh with Paula Hinkson, and daughter Elizabeth, with Werner Freigang, and grandchildren Charlie, Craig, Heather, Sebastian and Alex, and 5 great grandchildren, as well as multiple nieces and nephews in the U.S. and Australia. She hid her nature from no one she loved, and she lived and loved life to the fullest.

The Gardener takes only the most worthy of blooms.

Tribute Wall

CK

“ *What fun Pat and Connie Keller had with both Lee and Heather over the years we lived on Orcas. Bell choir, church choir, community choir, dinners,. We loved it all. Bluey and Lee were our up the hill neighbors and added much to our lives.*

Connie Keller - January 16, 2015 at 12:00 AM

EO

“ *Thank you for posting these lovely pictures! What a beauty!*

Elizabeth O'Malley - January 16, 2015 at 12:00 AM

MD

“ *Me and Rick give our sincerest condolence's. We care for you a lot Leigh and offer our support through this difficult time. Sometimes the counselor needs to talk; you're welcome to call anytime.*

Melissa Dasher - January 16, 2015 at 12:00 AM