



Mrs. Francesca S. McKeighan

January 10, 1933 - January 24, 2015

Francesca “Fran” Sondra McKeighan, 82, longtime resident of Asheville, both now and in her youth, died, Saturday January 24, 2015 following long illnesses. She was born on January 10, 1933 in Oak Park, Illinois. She was preceded in death by her husband Robert A. McKeighan, mother Frances Barber diCosola, and father Ralph M. diCosola.

She is survived by sons John McKeighan (Melodi), Urbandale, IA, and Peter McKeighan (Catherine), St Charles, IL; and grandchildren Alexandra and Andrew (IA) and Kaitlin, Jennifer and Caroline (IL).

Her love for the mountains was developed in school during WWII in Asheville at St. Genevieve’s. She went on to earn her degree in creative writing from Northwestern University. She had a strong interest in history, especially the US Civil War and the western frontier, and was certified to teach HS history. One of her proudest achievements was becoming a Master Gardener. A longtime Chicagoan, she and her husband retired to WNC spending a great deal of time at Lake James. Her volunteer civic involvement included leadership in the Chicago-area League of Women Voters, Ruth Davidson Chapter of the DAR, History Club and the Asheville Garden Club to name a few. She adored her feline companions, enjoyed photography, birdwatching, tending her garden and bear gazing. Despite numerous medical issues, she maintained her offbeat sense of humor throughout.

A celebration of life will be held at 1:00 PM on Saturday, January 31, 2015 at Morris Funeral Home, 304 Merrimon Avenue. The family will be receiving

guests for the hour preceding this service.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Asheville Garden Club, Inc., 11 Colonial Place, Asheville, NC 28804, the American Heart Association, 3535 Pelham Road, Greenville, SC 29615 or to the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, www.lls.org.

Previous Events

Family will Receive Friends

JAN 31. 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (ET)

Morris Funeral & Cremation Care
304 Merrimon Ave.
Asheville, NC 28801
(828) 252-1821
info@morrisfamilycare.com
<http://www.morrisfamilycare.com>

Celebration of Life

JAN 31. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (ET)

Morris Funeral & Cremation Care
304 Merrimon Ave.
Asheville, NC 28801
(828) 252-1821
info@morrisfamilycare.com
<http://www.morrisfamilycare.com>

Tribute Wall



“ *Mrs. Francesca S. McKeighan*

October 07, 2023 at 11:15 AM



“ *I became acquainted with Fran through the History Club and found her a bright, witty, and strong addition to our Club. When I was President, she and another member agreed to update our bylaws and did so with pleasure and dedication. It was easier for her to have the meetings in her home, and she always served a lovely lunch. Fran was always making great suggestions for programs, and came to all programs unless she was "a bit under the weather". I always loved when she hosted the meetings, because her home was like being in a History Museum.*

I was out of country when Fran died, and was sad to hear of her passing when I returned this weekend. I had really looked forward to sharing my travel experiences with her.

My condolences to the family and friends.

Sincerely,

Joyce Birkenholz

Joyce Birkenholz - February 03, 2015 at 07:34 AM



“ *I was saddened to hear of Fran's passing. She lived her life to the fullest. I got to know her through the League of Women Voters. She was a dedicated leaguer. My thoughts and prayers are with the family.*

Susan Fisher - February 01, 2015 at 07:48 PM

KB

“*Fran was such joy to be around I feel honored to have known her & to be able to help care for her cats throughout the years. I will miss her and her wonderful stories of her and her family. My thoughts and prayers to the family. May God Bless you and comfort you at this time. Love Kelly Brown*

Kelly Brown - January 31, 2015 at 12:31 AM

MS

“*I would like to send my sympathy to Fran's family. What an interesting person she was! We were neighbors at the lake. She suggested we buy her house on Lake James and we did as she had to give it up due to health issues. She toured us around Asheville and other places of interest. Our tour ended with a flat tire! I continue to enjoy the lake house and think of Fran often. I am thankful for her generosity.*

Mary Elen Smith - January 29, 2015 at 10:17 AM

MP

“ I met Fran 4 years ago when my husband and I moved to Asheville. I was blessed and fortunate to be seated next to her at the first meeting I attended of the Ruth Davidson Chapter of the DAR. Being new to Asheville I was concerned about meeting new people and learning about the community. At our first meeting Fran and I hit it off right away. She was kind, friendly, and most concerned about acquainting me with all Asheville and Western North Carolina has to offer. Our friendship flourished and continued until her death. She sponsored me as a member of the History Club, we attended musicals and holiday services at the First Baptist Church of Asheville, enjoyed discussing our mutual love of history, and attended the film *Monument Men*, after she read the book. Fran was a "historical treasure." I loved to listen to her and so enjoyed our discussions of history. She shared many wonderful stories of her life and lives of her family members. I fondly recall our dining experiences, as Fran enjoyed nice restaurants and the lunches served at the History Club meetings. At the luncheon meetings, before serving her plate, I would look at the choices and inform Fran. She would tell me what she was not allowed to eat, and would then tell me to fill her plate with exactly those choices. I am as naughty as Fran, loved to indulge her, and would NEVER argue. She was happy with the small, "forbidden" portions. My husband and I visited Venice, Florence, and Rome in November of 2014. While we were there, I took photos and put them on Facebook for family and friends. Even at 81, amazing Fran was techno savy with her I-Pad. I had the photos printed. She and I kept hoping for a time when she would be well enough for us to enjoy them together. Unfortunately, my dear friend and I were not able to share the Italy photos. This will always be a great loss to me. When we discussed our Italian vacations, Fran whetted my appetite. I so looked forward to hearing her describe her wonderful experiences in Italy, using my photographs. I will forever miss Fran's knowledge, wry sense of humor, generosity, kindness, and companionship. A friend and I agreed that there will never be another Fran. I am honored and blessed to have know her, if for just awhile.

Margaret J. Paschal - January 29, 2015 at 09:07 AM

EW

“ I am so very sorry about the loss of dear Fran. We all loved her in the Asheville Garden Club. She was so supportive of everything we did --and even offered her lovely home for a tour of her container gardens two years ago. She never let her illness get her down --and was very plucky with a very determined can do spirit! We all loved it when Fran was able to join us for one of our meetings! And I am so grateful that she was at our Christmas luncheon ---and she was assuring us then that she was doing just fine! She will be very missed and never forgotten! My condolences to her family ---Elaine Wagner

Elaine Wagner - January 28, 2015 at 04:36 PM

DS

“ Hello. I am saddened by the loss of my dear history club friend. She was sweet and feisty at the same time ago. It seems like just a couple of meetings ago Fran was wanting our group to go To Highlands and Cashiers and to stop at a Scottish museum. I will miss our conversations and I will miss her love of all things Scottish as much of my own ancestry is Scottish

Diane Swift - January 28, 2015 at 02:41 PM

PB

“ Fran was one of my favorite people. I learned much from her and valued our time together.

*Pam Benes, Past President
The Asheville Garden Club, Inc.*

Pam Benes - January 28, 2015 at 01:10 AM



“ *Basket Full of Wishes was purchased for the family of Mrs. Francesca S. McKeighan.*



January 26, 2015 at 12:39 PM



“ *I would like to express my condolences to Peter and John and there families. I was proud to know Fran and enjoyed spending time with her the past few years. Fran was such an interesting person who shared with me her wealth of knowledge. She had such a love for Civil War history, of the history of the local community and gardening. I know more now about gardening than I ever thought I would because of her. She spoke often of her family and was proud of them. She was strong in the face of so many health issues and was determined to live her life to the fullest despite the constant physical battles she had to endure. She was an inspiration to the rest of us. I will miss you Fran, and will always remember you with fondness.*

Walt

Walt Ingram - January 25, 2015 at 03:09 PM



We are going to miss seeing you at the Fresh Market.
Bobby

Bobby Penley - January 27, 2015 at 08:24 PM