



Ursula Setlow Pearson

March 17, 2016

Ursula Setlow Pearson, a community leader and role model on how to age well, died peacefully in her home on Thursday, March 17. She was 104 years old. A native of New Haven CT, she was the beloved wife of the late Dr. Julius R. Pearson, daughter of the late Dorothy and Joseph Setlow, and sister of the late Herbert D. Setlow.

She graduated from Smith College in 1932 and, as one of the oldest living graduates, led the alumnae parade at her 80th reunion in 2012. As a French major, she spent her Junior Year at the Sorbonne in Paris, and never lost her French conversational skills. The only female member of her Yale graduate school class, she received her Masters in Romance Languages in 1934. She wrote her thesis on George Sand, which her professor thought was very daring. "They were so straight-laced in those days," she said. She was respected for her broad knowledge on many subjects. "Ursi knows everything," concluded her younger brother Herbert, when they were only children.

Mrs. Pearson met her husband in Miami Beach during a respite from the New Haven winter. He proposed to her (after only two weeks and six dates) because "you make me dream," he told her. They married in 1936 and she moved to Miami Beach to join him, a young cardiologist, and subsequently managed his medical practice until his retirement in 1967. She returned to CT only during WWII, when her husband served in the Air Force overseas, and she taught languages at a local high school. Mrs. Pearson became a volunteer in The Council of Jewish Women and Hadassah. In 1948, she became a lifetime member of Brandeis University. As a music lover and student of piano since childhood, she enjoyed Miami's growing cultural life – the ballet, opera, and symphony. The Pearsons also enjoyed an active social life with many close friends. Looking back on their 30 years in Miami, she commented, "we watched the community grow."

In 1967, they retired and moved to Sands Point on Long Boat Key. They became supporters of New College. Lifelong learners, they took courses at New College and the Sarasota Institute of Lifetime Learning. For years, she wrote and edited the Sands Point newspaper. She became an early organizer of the Jewish community in Sarasota. She

worked for the Florida West Coast Symphony and was a member of Friends of Chamber Music. She continued to play four-hand piano with a friend until her move to the Sarasota Bay Club in 2004, following Dr. Pearson's prolonged illness and death.

At the young age of 92, Mrs. Pearson launched a full life as a leader in her new SBC community -- as the elected president of the Residents Advisory Council (RAC), as a poet and president of "Inchoate Poets Club, " as a member of the French conversation club and as a volunteer -- for the Designing Women Boutique (to raise money for the arts), for the Jewish Children and Family Service (a counseling organization), for the Mental Health Society, and for the Sarasota Ballet. She maintained acuity and elegance to the end – with posture that rivaled a ballet dancer.

She lived her philosophy of "keeping busy, keeping involved, doing good, and enjoying people." Her frequent wish for those she loved was "Have a good life."

She is survived by three loving nieces, Marcie Setlow of Great Barrington MA; Carolyn Setlow of Washington Depot CT; and Elinor Horwitz of Chevy Chase MD; and many great and grand nieces and nephews.

A Celebration of Life will be held on Tuesday, May 3rd, at 2 pm at the Sarasota Bay Club, 1301 N. Tamiami Trail.

Memorial donations may be sent to The Children's Tumor Foundation, 120 Wall Street, 16th fl., New York NY 10005 or at www.ctf.org.