



Eloise English Davies

April 21, 1920 - March 3, 2015

Eloise English Davies, one of the first of the Navy Waves in World War II, and later a senior attorney on the appellate staff of the Justice Department, died March 3 in her home at Heron Point in Chestertown, MD, after a brief illness. She was 94.

The daughter of Rear Admiral Robert Henry English and Eloise Walker English of Warrenton, GA, she joined the WAVES in 1942 shortly before her father, serving as commander of Pacific submarine forces, was killed in a plane crash that also took the lives of his entire staff. Ensign English put on her new Navy uniform for the first time to attend his funeral.

As a Navy junior, she grew up moving from coast to coast, living overseas in Panama and for many years in Hawaii, where her father was the commanding officer of the cruiser USS Helena during the attack on Pearl Harbor. She was a proud alumna of the Punahou School and returned often to Hawaii to research and write about the 1932 Massie trial which was based on an incident she recalled from her childhood in Honolulu.

Her Navy service began after her graduation from Sweet Briar College in 1942. She worked in public relations and at the Navy Photo Lab, in Washington, DC, where her staff included the future noted photographer M. E. Warren. While on an assignment to the White House, she caught the eye of

artist Norman Rockwell, who painted her into a centerfold spread for The Saturday Evening Post—a portrait that would later hang in the White House. When the magazine first appeared, it circulated widely among Navy readers and Eloise said she was teased mercilessly for a caption that read, “What has Miss America got that Wave Ensign Eloise English hasn’t got?” In far-off Brazil where none of the officers in the BOQ had ever seen a Navy Wave, Thomas D. Davies, an aviator who had just won the Distinguished Flying Cross for sinking a German U-boat, saw Rockwell’s portrait in the magazine and determined to look her up when he returned stateside. They married in 1945.

While adjusting to the demands of constant redeployments and to the challenges of raising four children, Mrs. Davies decided to take advantage of her GI Bill benefits to go back to school to become a lawyer—the beginning of a distinguished career well before women were encouraged to think of such things. She was among a very few female students at Villanova University School of Law where she graduated with distinction in 1958, earning the Order of the Coif.

Mrs. Davies practiced law for the Department of Justice from 1966 until 1984, serving in the criminal, legislative, and civil divisions. On the appellate staff, she represented the U.S. government in civil lawsuits, arguing in every one of the twelve U.S. Courts of Appeal over the course of her career. As a senior attorney, Mrs. Davies served as a mentor and role model to a number of younger women lawyers at the DOJ.

Mrs. Davies retired in 1984 to spend more time traveling with her husband, a retired Rear Admiral and former deputy director of the U.S. Arms Control Agency, and to enjoy their children and grandchildren and their home in Potomac, MD.

Widowed in 1991, she moved to San Diego, CA, where she married another

retired Naval officer, Capt. Eugene P. Rankin. She enjoyed a home in Coronado, trips to China, Russia, India, and Antarctica, and visits with both Rankin and Davies family members until Capt. Rankin's death in 2000.

For the past 15 years, Eloise lived at Heron Point in Chestertown, MD, along with her miniature poodle, Teddy. She maintained an active interest in politics and in the activities of the Supreme Court. She completed her manuscript about Clarence Darrow and his role in the Massie Trial. Despite losing her eyesight to macular degeneration, she kept her interest in books, listening to audio versions of histories and biographies.

Eloise is survived by Thomas D. Davies, Jr., (Kathleen) of Annapolis, MD, Douglas Davis (Gretchen) of Dallas, TX, Ronald A. Davies of Springfield, MO, Meredith Davies Hadaway of Chestertown, MD; grandchildren, Brian Davies (Jennifer) of Silver Spring, MD, Sara Davies of Herndon, VA, Jonathan and Peter Davies of Dallas, TX, Matthew and Jesse Cawood Davies of Springfield, MO; and great-grandchildren, Clara Mae Eloise and Amelia Davies of Silver Spring, MD; as well as devoted family friends in Chestertown, John Lang and Jennifer Kaczmarczyk; and her beloved dog, Teddy.

Services will be at the St. Andrew's Chapel, United States Naval Academy, Monday, April 27 at 10:30 a.m.

Cemetery Details

United States Naval Academy Chapel

United States Naval Academy
Annapolis, MD 21402

Previous Events

Service

APR 27. 10:30 AM (ET)

United States Naval Academy Chapel
United States Naval Academy
Annapolis, MD 21402

Tribute Wall



“ *Eloise English Davies*

October 26, 2023 at 06:42 PM



“ *Eloise English Davies*

January 28, 2023 at 12:44 PM



“ *Eloise English Davies*

January 28, 2023 at 08:03 AM



“ *I remember Heidi (and Neal) and the sunroom when it was new. I remember how the upstairs refrigerator always had Celeste Deluxe Frozen Pizzas. I remember Gene and his boat and how your Mom's first move in the Senior Living place was to throw a cocktail party. But mostly I remember her unfailing kindness to me. She was one of the Last Dragons and now she is a star. I'm sure she wouldn't accept anything less.*

Cathy Shapleigh - June 30, 2015 at 08:06 PM



“ *Jennifer Brauer Davies lit a candle in memory of Eloise English Davies*



Jennifer Brauer Davies - March 04, 2015 at 01:21 PM

CD

“ *Clara Mae Eloise Davies lit a candle in
memory of Eloise English Davies* ”



Clara Mae Eloise Davies - March 04, 2015 at 01:13 PM