



Forbes Widell

June 6, 1919 - February 4, 2009

Forbes Johnston Widell passed away Wednesday, February 4, 2009. She was 89 and a member of Christ Church in St. Michaels, MD.

The beloved wife of Carl Widell, Sr., and the mother of four children, nine grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren, Forbes lived most of her life in St. Louis, Missouri. She came to St. Michaels with her son, Carl Widell, Jr., when her husband of 59 years passed away in St. Louis.

Forbes Widell was born Jean Forbes Johnston on June 6, 1919 in Selkirk, Scotland. Her father, Major Ebenezer Johnston, had been stationed in Ypres, France, where he fought in the Great War with the Canadian Expeditionary Force from 1914 through 1918. Her mother, Jessie Douglas, was from a prominent family on the Scottish Borders engaged in publishing and bookbinding.

She came to America when her father emigrated to Canada and later to the United States as a designer of woolen tweeds. She lived in New York, Maine, Wisconsin and Connecticut as Major Johnston rose to vice president of the American Woolen Company. She spent many summers at the Chautauqua Festival and gained a life-long appreciation for the outdoors, especially bird-watching.

Forbes attended Penn Hall, a finishing school for girls in Chambersburg, West Virginia. An accomplished equestrian, she won many blue ribbons, was president of the Equestrian Club and president of the student body. It was at Penn Hall where Forbes took her first name, never having liked being called "Jeannie".

She worked for an interior design firm in New York City during World War II, counting among her designs the Ball Room of the New York Hilton Hotel. Her brother, Charles Young Johnston, was a highly decorated fighter pilot in the South Pacific, with the U.S. Army. While working at the English Speaking Union, she met a young U.S. Naval Lieutenant, Carl Widell, fell in love and married him. After the war, the family lived in Ohio, Seattle and Portland, until finally settling in St. Louis, where Carl Widell was vice president of the Wagner Electric Company.

Forbes was active in many charities in St. Louis, including the Red Cross, the Municipal Art Museum and the Congregational Church. At 54, she earned her pilot's license and flew her Moody all through the mid-west, as far away as New Orleans. A lover of opera, she was in the Opera Guild of the New York Metropolitan Opera for many years.

Forbes is survived by her daughter, Patricia Marx of New York, NY; and her sons, Carl Widell, Jr. of St. Michaels, MD, Douglas Widell of Blanco, TX, and David Widell of Arlington, MA.

Services will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, February 21 at Christ Church in St. Michaels, MD.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be sent to the Talbot Hospice Foundation, 586 Cynwood Drive, Easton, MD 21601.

Tribute Wall



“ *Forbes Widell*

October 26, 2023 at 06:42 PM



“ *Forbes Widell*

January 28, 2023 at 12:44 PM



“ *Forbes Widell*

January 28, 2023 at 08:03 AM



“ *Mom was great. I will miss her spirit. See all you guys
Friday.##imported-begin##David Widell##imported-end##*

February 18, 2009 at 10:44 AM