



Jean C. Hemphill

September 24, 1925 - January 23, 2023

Jean Cálves Hemphill, who raised eight children and was the wife of the late Philadelphia City Controller, Alexander Hemphill, died January 23, 2023, in Oxford MD, where she had made her home for the past 40 years. She was 97 years old.

Born in Philadelphia to Herbert E. Cálves, a civil engineer, and the former Elizabeth Casanave, Hemphill graduated from Oldfields School in Maryland and the University of Pennsylvania.

She first met Hemphill at a high school dance at age 14, and they were immediately taken with each other, eventually marrying just after World War II, while Hemphill was still in the Navy. They settled in Philadelphia, raising a family of seven girls and a boy while Hemphill went to law school and entered Democratic politics, winning a race for Philadelphia City Controller in 1957. He was re-elected twice before resigning to run unsuccessfully for mayor in 1967.

Mrs. Hemphill was very supportive of his political career, became a Democratic committeewoman, and gave her husband a lot of private advice. At public appearances, she stood in the background and gave him a signal when it was time to stop talking.

Once her last child began school, she went back to school to earn certification

as a Montessori teacher and joined a group of parents to establish the Waverly Children's House in Glenside, PA.

The young family spent their summers in Longport NJ, and acquired their first sailboat, a GP 14, named after her, the "Boss Lady." Her love for sailing never ended. In 1981, they purchased a waterfront cottage on Island Creek, outside Oxford, MD. Her love of the Eastern Shore was immediate. She promptly retired to work on the house, and it became her permanent home after her husband died in 1986. Whether in Philadelphia, Longport, or Oxford, Boss Lady's home was open to her extended family and their many friends. There was always room for one more at her home or table.

She is survived by six of her daughters – Pricie Hanna of West Chester, PA, Elizabeth Burns and Jean Hemphill of Philadelphia, Rebecca Firth of Trappe MD, Louisa Zendt of Oxford, and Therese Hemphill of Delhaven NJ, – and her son, Alexander, known as Sander, who lives in Barefoot Bay, FL. Another daughter, Dallett Hemphill, died in 2015. Her other survivors include a brother, Robert Cálves of Irvington, VA, as well as 18 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

A celebration of her long, wonderful life will be held at the Church of Holy Trinity, in Oxford at 2 p.m. on Saturday April 8, 2023.

In lieu of flowers, the family hopes her life of kindness, generosity, and hospitality will be remembered and shared.

Previous Events

celebration of life

APR 8. 2:00 PM (ET)

Church of The Holy Trinity
Oxford, MD

Tribute Wall



“ Jean C. Hemphill

October 26, 2023 at 06:42 PM



“ Jean was a treasured friend and always a pleasure to be around. We loved stopping at her house after bridge. She played bridge better than she realized. We hope St. Peter will forgive her for some of the words she used during bridge. A fascinating lady to spend time with. She knew Philadelphia inside out. We have missed seeing her for a long time now but have many happy memories of her.
Gary & Rosalie Evans

Gary & Rosalie Evans - February 09, 2023 at 03:57 PM



“ Jean C. Hemphill

January 28, 2023 at 12:44 PM



“ Jean C. Hemphill

January 28, 2023 at 08:03 AM



“ June Shortall lit a candle in memory of Jean C. Hemphill



June Shortall - January 26, 2023 at 12:25 PM



A wonderful friend and neighbor to my grandparents Elizabeth and William Bringman jr.

June Shortall - January 26, 2023 at 12:27 PM



Thank you June. The Bringmans were such wonderful neighbors to Mom and Dad. We have wonderful memories of them as they trained us in Eastern Shore ways. Jean Jr.

Jean Hemphill - February 05, 2023 at 06:15 PM



Thank you Jean jr.

June Shortall - February 07, 2023 at 02:27 PM