



## Wally Dashiell

October 31, 1923 - August 14, 2024

Just past her 100th birthday, Mrs. Wally Dashiell, of Stevensville, passed away quietly, Aug. 14, surrounded by family and friends while at Compass Hospice in Centreville. An icon in Queen Anne's County and beyond, Wally's love of life was contagious. As a dancer and dance instructor, her students knew and loved her well. Many of them attended the birthday celebration in her honor last November.

She was born to the late Paul and Marie Heiber of Germany, October 31, 1923. She is pre-deceased by her brother, Gerhard Leiber, of Germany, and her sister, Erika Leiber-Witzleben of Toronto, Canada. She is survived by her only son, Edwin and his wife, Janet, as well as their two adult sons, Charles and Eric Dashiell, all of Falling Waters, WVA. Also, her niece of Toronto, Canada, Christa Morgan, great niece Susan Morgan, and great nephew David Morgan. Great-great nieces, Sophia and Laila.

Wally's late husband, George Dashiell, originally of Cambridge, Maryland passed away 16 years ago.

Both Wally and George were founding members of the Kent Island Elks Lodge 2576, in Stevensville, in 1978. Wally was a member of the former "Ladies of the Elks", until it was disbanded more than a decade ago, when women were permitted to join as regular Elk members with the men.

Wally was born in the eastern part of Germany. She grew-up in Germany, and learned to dance ballet in her early teens, even though her parents disapproved of her dancing. She excelled as a ballerina, performing even during WWII in Germany. After the war, while living in Berlin, she met U.S. Army Sgt. George Dashiell in a dance hall for American soldiers. She recalled, "I was impressed with George immediately. He was a gentleman, which many of the soldiers were not! We began dating after the initial meeting, and soon we were married." George and Wally were married in Germany. Their son, Edwin, was also born in Germany, before George was finished serving his tour of duty with the Army, while stationed there.

The Dashiell's returned to Cambridge after George was honorably discharged from the military. Wally became a dance instructor while living in Cambridge, starting the Dashiell School of Dancing, in the late 1940s. While beginning her school, Wally was approached by African American parents, asking if she would teach their children ballet? She agreed to do so, but, because segregation was still enforced during the late 40s and early 1950s in Maryland and across the U.S., Wally agreed to teach all children, but had to do it in separate locations.

As the Civil Rights movement progressed, she recalled dance recitals were held at a public school building, and the recitals no longer were held separately. "We had to obey the law," said Wally. "We then began holding recitals and training sessions together, both Black and white children! I remember losing three white children because we were now integrated."

George and Wally moved to historic, downtown Stevensville in the early 1950s, converting the two-story building they bought into their home (upstairs), and dance studio (downstairs).

Wally trained her students to the highest standards of dance, promoted by the national dance organization known as “Dance Master of America”. This organization provides certification for dance instructors. Wally served as an officer for many years with Dance Masters. Many of her students went on to perform at the Kennedy Center each year in the Christmas Season performances of the Nutcracker, as well as performances in New York City along, and on Broadway.

Dr. Carol Thompson, former Superintendent of Schools for Queen Anne’s County Public Schools, and QACPS dance teacher and “2022 Teacher of the Year”, at Kent Island High School, Amber Wright, were both taught ballet by Wally. Thompson said, “Mrs. Dashiell taught me to have confidence and poise, skills I’ve needed throughout my career.” Wright always introduces herself as a “graduate of Dashiell School of Dancing”, and whenever Wally would come to her dance recitals at the high school, she’d introduce her to the audiences.

After teaching at her school for more than 60-years, Wally retired in 2012, at the age of 89, and the school closed.

At the age of 60, Wally was diagnosed with breast cancer. She had surgery and was a breast cancer survivor for over 40-years. The last several years of her life, she enjoyed attending the annual Bosom Buddies Ball, in Annapolis, a major fundraiser to promote breast cancer research, and especially breast cancer prevention.

Following breast cancer surgery, Wally became involved in the Maryland Senior Olympics, first as a competitive swimmer, quickly transitioning to track and field events. She said, “Swimming was too slow for me. I liked the variety track and field provided.” And, Wally did it all! She did all the running events

and field events. Just five years ago, she held 20 state and national Sr. Olympics track and field records. One state record dating back to when she was in her 70s. When that was reported to her two-years ago, she said, “Was I ever 70-years old!?”.

When she turned 89, she had knee replacement surgery. Her doctor told her, “I shouldn’t do this surgery on you because of your age.” She replied to the doctor, “I can’t go on living with the pain in my knee. If I die while having surgery, don’t you give it a second thought!” The surgery was a success.

Two years later, she had hip replacement surgery, at age 91. In both cases, she recovered, and continued competing in the Sr. Olympics, however, her doctor told her, “No more running or jumping events at the Olympics! If you break either your knee or hip that have been replaced, there will be no fixing it.” She focused on competing in throwing events over the past decade. She competed in her final competition at the national games held in Pittsburgh, PA, in July 2023. She came home with three gold medals; one in javelin, one in shot put, and one in discus. She often spoke about the friendships she made during the Sr. Olympic competitions. Slowly, she admitted, “most of these friends have passed away over the years, and I miss them!”

At the games in Pittsburgh, as she was introduced to “the younger athletes” as the oldest female competitor at age 100, you could see on the faces of the other, younger athletes, the thought that may they too would one day be competing at 100 years old. It was very clear those who saw her compete were moved by her determination to be there, and not give up on life in general.

She was inducted into the first class of the Maryland Senior Olympians Hall of Fame almost two-decades ago. She was unofficially the Eastern Shore’s ambassador for the Maryland Sr. Olympics, always encouraging anyone 50-

years of age, or older, “to find a sport you like, and come compete and have fun at the Sr. Olympics.”

She said, “I’d often hear people say, ‘I can’t do things like that anymore. I have too many pains.’ I would reply, I have pains too, but I don’t let that stop me. I still have fun at the Olympics!”

Wally Dashiell’s celebration of life is scheduled for Saturday afternoon, Nov. 2, beginning at 1 p.m. It will be held at the Kent Island Elks, Lodge 2576, located at 2525 Romancoke Road, Stevensville, MD, 21666.

In lieu of flowers, please donate in Wally’s name to either the Carole Cascio Dance Foundation, c/o Chesapeake Charities, 101 Log Canoe Circle, Suite O, Stevensville, Md. 21666, or Bosom Buddies Charities, Inc., P.O. Box 112, Stevensville, Md. 21666. Both are registered 501©3 charities.

# Previous Events

## **celebration of life**

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NOV 2. 1:00 PM (ET)

Kent Island Elks Lodge  
2525 Romancoke Road  
Stevensville, MD 21666

# Tribute Wall



“ *Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Wally Dashiell*



Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home - October 31, 2024 at 11:38 AM

MR

“ *In loving memory of Mrs. Wally Dashiell. I have so many vivid wonderful memories of Mrs. Dashiell when she was teaching her ballet class to me and my sister Mary Ann in Cambridge, MD. Rest in Peace, Mrs. Dashiell, you will never be forgotten. Marsha Turner (Rochow)*

Marsha T Rochow - October 06, 2025 at 05:41 PM

M(

“ *Marsha Turner (Rochow) planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Wally Dashiell.*

Marsha Turner (Rochow) - October 06, 2025 at 05:26 PM

M(

“ *Marsha Turner (Rochow) purchased the Simply E legant Spathiphyllum for the family of Wally Dashiell.*



Marsha Turner (Rochow) - October 06, 2025 at 05:26 PM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall

Kimberly Paddy - October 22, 2024 at 03:15 PM

CB

“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



Claudia Boldyga - October 15, 2024 at 11:43 AM

CD

“ Carol Davenport lit a candle in memory of Wally Dashiell



Carol Davenport - October 11, 2024 at 06:55 PM

CD

Wally was an amazing person and I'm honored to call her my inspiration all the years I've known her! She became my good friend and there has not been a day that goes by since we lost her that I don't think about her. Wally I miss you so much ! Love You ❤️ Rest In Peace my sweet friend 🙏

Carol Davenport - October 11, 2024 at 07:05 PM

WF

“ *Wargotz Family*

*A full life for a unique wonderful person. She will be missed by our family and so many others. Thanks for the excellent work teaching, community service, and the great entertainment Wally!*



**Wargotz Family** - September 15, 2024 at 02:14 PM

TR

“ *Tracie Riddell lit a candle in memory of Wally Dashiell*



**Tracie Riddell** - August 27, 2024 at 08:38 AM

KC

“ *3 files added to the tribute wall*



**Kimberly Cascia** - August 26, 2024 at 02:03 PM

KC

*God Bless Ms. Dashiell!  
The Cascia Family*

**Kimberly Cascia** - August 26, 2024 at 02:05 PM

ND

“ I danced with Mrs. Dashiell for 21 years. I feel blessed to have known such an independent, resilient, loyal and dedicated woman. I am a better woman for having known her. God knew I needed her in my life. I will NEVER forget her.

Nancy Davis - August 23, 2024 at 08:31 PM

MP

“ I am so sorry to hear of Mrs. Dashiell's passing. What an amazing life she led. I took ballet lessons from Mrs. Dashiell from 1968 - 1972 when she had her dance studio in Easton.

Michele Parker - August 21, 2024 at 04:22 PM

LS

“ Lori Sullivan lit a candle in memory of Wally Dashiell



Lori Sullivan - August 21, 2024 at 08:35 AM

BS

“ Barb Seese lit a candle in memory of Wally Dashiell



Barb Seese - August 20, 2024 at 11:02 PM

MP

“ Michele Parker lit a candle in memory of Wally Dashiell

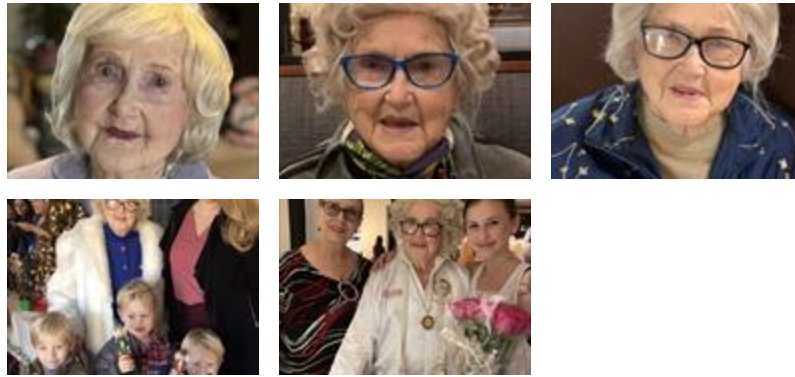


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**Michele Parker** - August 20, 2024 at 08:35 PM

CH

“ 25 files added to the tribute wall



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**Chris Helfenbein** - August 20, 2024 at 03:32 PM

CE

“ Connie Edwards lit a candle in memory of Wally Dashiell



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**Connie Edwards** - August 20, 2024 at 01:37 PM

DC

“ *Deborah Clarke lit a candle in memory of Wally Dashiell*



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**deborah clarke** - August 19, 2024 at 11:52 AM

SJ

“ *Suzanne Jackson lit a candle in memory of Wally Dashiell*



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**Suzanne Jackson** - August 17, 2024 at 04:50 PM

MA

“ *I met Wally 25 years ago through her late husband, George, the long-time Secretary of the Kent Island Elks Lodge...Wally was teaching girls to dance through lessons at her Stevensville dance studio. For years Wally was a participant in the National Senior Olympics, specializing in the javelin throw. She set records for distance, but one practice throw in her backyard got her in trouble with George. It went further than she expected and landed in the garden hose, gifting George the only 'one-up' argument the two had (at least on record!). Wally was a 'war bride' George met at the end of the Second World War.. Everyone who met this pair was glad George brought Wally into their lives. She will be missed!*

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**Mark Anderson** - August 17, 2024 at 01:50 PM

LS

“ *Lu Anne Smith lit a candle in memory of Wally Dashiell*



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**Lu Anne smith** - August 17, 2024 at 10:45 AM

JS

“ *Wally, you will be so missed by many!  
Our friendship started 63 years ago!  
Laurie came to your studio in Easton at age 3!  
And then my Mom rented you the building in Stevensville!* 🙏🙏🙏

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**Jane sparks** - August 16, 2024 at 10:57 AM