



## Ethlyn Frances Howard

January 9, 2022

Ethlyn Frances Howard, 91, reached the end of a valiant decades-long battle with Parkinson's disease and Neuropathy on January 09, 2022.

In hospice care since December 2021, she inspired many with her resilient mind and positive outlook. Born in 1931 in Portsmouth, VA, she grew up there near the waterways and docks intertwined with the neighborhood. In her final days, Ethlyn still recounted walking home from school with her best friend Jean, who referred to the young folks of those days as "water-rats."

Known in the Portsmouth rail yards at Captain George, her father was a railroad engineer and yard master. As a child Ethlyn showed an interest in playing piano at the age of 6, learning to love music at the old upright piano in her family home. She went on to become an accomplished pianist with a master's degree in Music Literature from the University of Michigan. Her undergraduate degree was awarded from the Norfolk division of William and Mary College (Now Old Dominion).

After her graduation, Ethlyn took a teaching position but soon came to realize that instructing in the classroom wasn't her preferred venue for sharing the gift of music. Instead she became the organist at several notable cathedrals, where the massive pipe organs needed someone with her talent and passion for excellence.

Also notable during a life spent in service to others were her years in Bethesda, MD as secretary to the Nobel Prize winning virologist Robert C. Gallo who discovered the virus which in 1989 came to be known as HIV. Managing his demanding schedule and many travel commitments required the commitment to detail that marked her professional career. After her retirement she returned to Portsmouth, VA.

She served as Resident Council President at the Elizabeth Seton Residence in Wellesley MA, where she moved in 2014 to be closer to family. The family expresses appreciation to the team of caretakers there and the hospice staff, along with the many physicians who participated in her care.

Ethlyn was predeceased by her sister, Jane Howard Patrick who spent her senior years in Cooperstown, NY. Survivors include her two nephews, David and John Patrick along with their families, who will always remember her fondly as their beloved Aunt Ethlyn.

Her ashes will be interred at the burial site of her mother and father, George and Ethlene Howard, at Oak Grove Cemetery on Wednesday, November 16, 2022 at 11 am.

# Previous Events

## Committal Service

NOV **16**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Graveside - Oak Grove Cemetery  
The corner of London Blvd. & Peninsula Ave.  
Portsmouth, VA 23704

# Tribute Wall

LC

“ *Miss Howard was my first piano teacher. I remember going to her home in Park View for lessons. This little girl was baffled by that beautiful piano on the 2nd floor. I just couldnt figure how she got it there! She shared her love of music and I am so thankful.*

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**Laura Crim Chandler** - November 15, 2022 at 07:52 AM