

Mary Hallowell Tomlinson Kester (8-29-28 to 2/16/09)

Mary was born on August 29, 1928 in Jenkintown, PA. She often laughed that her first bed was a bureau drawer, since she was born at the house on Washington Lane. She was the youngest of three children born to Frances Hallowell and Cyrus Ernest Tomlinson Sr. They were members of Abington Friends Meeting of the Society of Friends. Mary was raised in the meeting and was a faithful Friend her entire life. She grew up in Jenkintown and attended schools there, graduating from Jenkintown High School in 1946. She had a enjoyable childhood there though she regretted that she never learned to ride a bicycle. Her interests were art, literature, swimming and Girls Scouts. She earned the highest rank in Girl Scouts, that of First Class Scout and was very proud of this accomplishment.

Early on, Mary wished to become an artist. Upon graduation from Jenkintown applied to college at Rhode Island School of Design and to Pembroke College, now known as Brown University. Her father did not wish her to pursue art as he considered it impractical. He convinced her that Pembroke was the wiser choice. So she enrolled at Brown University and graduated in 1950 with a degree in English Literature. After graduation, Mary enrolled in the Masters of Library Science Program at Drexel University. While at Drexel, Mary's good friend, Elaine Coate, introduced her to Paul Kester of Newtown, Bucks County, Elaine's classmate. Mary completed her Masters degree and then went to work as a reference librarian at Women's Medical College in Philadelphia.

After their courtship, Mary and Paul were married under the care of Abington Friends Meeting on March 9, 1952. While Paul attended law school at Temple University, Mary set up housekeeping in a duplex on Liberty Street in Newtown, PA. While there, three girls were born, Valerie in 1954, Robin Davis in 1955 and Dana Louise in 1958. The household was very full and they soon moved to 20 North Lincoln Avenue in Newtown. Paul graduated from Temple Law School and soon found employment as a lawyer with a firm in Doylestown, PA. The last child, Karen Ann was born in 1962, coinciding with Paul's new position as Bucks County Court

Administrator. Mary also transferred her meeting membership from Abington Friends to Newtown Friends Meeting. She served the meeting for many years on the Library and Scholarship Committees.

In 1967, Mary wished to move to a house that required less work and repair. So the family moved to 447 Merion Drive in Newtown Township. This year marked the first time all of the children were enrolled in school so Mary took a part-time position with The Bucks County Free Library in Doylestown as a cataloger of children's books. Mary enjoyed this work very much and remained employed at the library for 15 years.

Beginning in the late 1970's, Mary occupied herself with lots of activities, such as volunteering at the Newtown Historical Association. Each Christmas, Mary dressed in historic Quaker garb to be hostess at the Newtown Friends Meeting as part of the Newtown Historic House tour. She loved this activity, and enjoyed talking with visitors about the history of the meeting and the Society of Friends. During this time, Mary also joined a literature group initially through the AAUW and later with friends sharing this mutual endeavor. She took delight in hosting the evening desserts and discussion groups with the ladies.

In 1980, Mary received an appointment as the first full-time paid librarian for the Wrightstown (PA) Free Library (formerly the Village Library). This was a dream come true for her. She devoted her years there to developing the library, including an extensive children's collection and organizing weekly reading groups for pre-school children and the neighboring elementary school students. Her favorite activity there was reading to the children. She retired from the library in the spring of 1991.

During retirement, Mary enjoyed spending holidays with and visiting her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, covered-dish suppers at the Meeting, afternoon swimming, and visiting art museums, attending luncheons with her friends and relatives and, of course, partaking of chocolates. Mary was fortunate to be able to travel with Paul to many states for conventions, most notably Hawaii. Paul also arranged a dream trip for Mary to England visiting Stratford-on-Avon, Quaker sites, and the London area.

When apprised of friends in need of consolation, she always took time from her busy schedule to pay them a call. It could be said that Mary was the most devoted friend one could have, as she was meticulous in her correspondence with childhood, high school and college friends, always sending cards, letters, making phone calls and arranging visits.

Pennswood Village in Newtown provided home for Mary and Paul during the past 5 years where they became reacquainted with old friends and made new ones. Mary remained active in her literature group and participated in the Parkinson's Disease support group there. She is survived by her loving husband H. Paul Kester, daughters, Valerie Morrissey, Robin Patterson (Frank), Dana McCabe (Brad), and Karen Kester; grandchildren, Amanda Jimenez (Jose), Hillary Beal (Travis), Kendra Patterson, Michael and Dan Morrissey, Keanan and Finn McCabe, Matthew and Steve Ogram; great grandchildren Chase Patterson and Tyrin Beal; and first cousins Edwin Hallowell of Michigan and Elizabeth Williams of Florida.