



Juanita Chakerian

December 24, 1907 - December 11, 2010

"Jonnie" Chakerian of Corvallis died Dec. 11, 2010, two weeks shy of her 103rd birthday (her 104th, according to the family Bible).

Born Juanita Fairfax Randolph on Christmas Eve in Rockport, Ky., to Huston and Maybelle Maddox Randolph, Jonnie grew up in an orphanage after her parents died when she was 3. She was adopted by a kissin' cousin, Mills "Daddy" Logan, chief justice of the Kentucky Supreme Court and later U.S. senator from Kentucky.

A lifelong member of the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Democratic Party, she was nurtured at the orphanage by daughters of former slaves, and lived to vote for a black man to be president; attended inaugural balls at the White House; traveled alone to Russia in 1937, armed with a letter of introduction from the U.S. Secretary of State; and married an Armenian immigrant, the late Charles G. Chakerian, a professor of sociology with whom she traveled the world for 50-plus years.

In addition to an apparently unending capacity to talk, she had an insatiable curiosity about other people's life stories, and an inordinate fondness for coffee ice cream and slapstick comedy, ranging from Charlie Chaplin to the Pink Panther. Although she retained traces of her hillbilly heritage, she was a lady to the end of her long and full life who always wore dresses and lipstick ("Love That Red").

She maintained a remarkably open and accepting attitude toward life, without rancor or bitterness, right to the end, never wavering in her belief in humanity and especially in every member of her family. She is survived by her son, Randy (Randolph Logan) Chakerian, and daughter-in-law, Diane Henneberger, both of Corvallis; three grandchildren, Faith of Seal Rock, Raven of Portland, and John Charles of Palo Alto, Calif.; and one great-grandchild, with two more on the way.

Contributions in her memory can be made to Benton Hospice Service and/or the Corvallis-Benton County Public Library Foundation. A private ceremony and interment will take place in Walnut Creek, Calif., where her late husband, Charles, is also interred.