



Margaret Elizabeth Meehan

June 28, 1921 - September 26, 2014

Margaret E. Meehan

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Margaret E. Meehan died Friday, September 26, 2014 in Corvallis. She was 93.

Margaret was born on June 28, 1921 in Brooklyn, New York to Mary and Felix Garbarini. In 1929, the family moved to Newark, New Jersey where Margaret and her younger sister, Elizabeth were educated in the state's public school system. Margaret graduated from Rutgers University in 1948 with a B.A. degree in history, Phi Beta Kappa, summa cum laude. On scholarship as a teaching and research assistant, Margaret entered Rutgers' two-year master's program, earning an M.A. degree in American history and American government.

In June 1950, Margaret married Thomas R. Meehan, a fellow graduate student and World War II veteran. The couple moved to Princeton, New Jersey, where Thomas began his studies toward his doctorate degree at Princeton University and Margaret worked full time at the university's library. On full scholarship, Thomas continued and completed his studies toward his PhD degree at the University of Wisconsin and Margaret again worked full time at Wisconsin's university library.

Thomas was appointed assistant professor in American history at the Carnegie Institute of Technology (now Carnegie-Mellon) and Margaret accepted a position in the periodicals department of the University of Pittsburgh.

In 1962, the couple moved to Corvallis, Oregon where Thomas joined the faculty of the Department of History at Oregon State University. Repeating the pattern of most of her working life, Margaret joined the staff of OSU's library. Margaret was later appointed as a part-time faculty member of OSU's Department of History and named director of the University Honors Program, a position she held until her retirement in 1986.

Margaret was a phenomenal teacher and mentor who inspired her students to achieve the highest level of ethics, professionalism, excellence, enlightenment and uncompromising quality. She was both generous and exacting. Margaret and Thomas loved books and reading and collected approximately 8000 books, which Margaret recently donated to Oregon State University libraries.

Margaret was preceded in death by her beloved husband, Thomas, in 2006, and her sister, Elizabeth, in 2013. Margaret did not want a public memorial service, but friends are encouraged to remember her in private gatherings to share memories and a toast to a remarkable woman.

In 1991, Thomas and Margaret became members of the OSU Foundation William Jasper Kerr Society and this year became members of the James H. Jensen Society. Memorial contributions may be made to the OSU Foundation's Margaret E and Thomas R. Meehan University Honors College Professorship, the Thomas and Margaret Meehan History Scholarship established by Ronald Hagen, the Thomas R. Meehan Excellence in Teaching Award, Chintimini Wildlife Refuge, SafeHaven Humane Society or any humane society dedicated to the protection and well being of animals.

Comments



“ Margaret and Tom became a part of our lives in the fall of 1990. Our son, Nathan, was embarking on his college career that September and had received the Meehan OSU Presidential Scholarship. We met them for the first time at a reception for presidential scholars. The saying goes---"You never get a second chance to make a first impression." We will never forget meeting Margaret and Tom for the first time. Margaret was dressed in royal blue from head to foot. She was beautiful!! Tom stood quietly at her side as she took charge of the situation. By the time we were done with introductions, it was if we were lifelong friends.

This "take-charge" characteristic factored dramatically into our son's college education, as well. Margaret and Tom were so instrumental in his success. They were interested in the classes he was taking and his happiness with life on campus. Nathan received an outstanding education, not only in the classroom but beyond the classroom, too. He was very active in campus life and student government. And, Margaret and Tom enriched his academics with their own knowledge and information. When he graduated, he received two degrees---one in History and the other one in Art. The most important thing was that he learned the importance of lifelong learning. A few years later he earned his MBA from Stanford University and is now the vice-president of an Internet company that rents college textbooks online.

Our friendship with Margaret did not cease when Nathan graduated from OSU. Quite the contrary! We maintained an active correspondence. We would exchange notes, small gifts, phone calls. And, occasionally, we would travel to Corvallis to take her out to lunch or dinner. We will remember our last lunch date forever. It was a hot summer Sunday. The restaurant where she wanted to treat us to lunch wasn't open, so we ended up in a pub a couple of blocks away. Anyone who has ever shared a meal with Margaret knows that she liked double martinis. When the waiter/bartender came to our table, she told him---"I want a double martini and don't be shy." She really liked her drink, and we had a wonderful lunch!

The first thing my husband said when we learned that Margaret had passed away is-- -"She's with Tom, and they're building a library together in heaven." They were very special people---smart, kind, generous, and genuinely interested in others. We are so lucky to have known them.

Joyce and Gene Gamble

Joyce Gamble - October 09, 2014 at 05:14 PM



“ Margaret Meehan was Oregon State University's University Honors Program during my student years at OSU (1978-1983). The depth and breadth of honors colloquia offered then to those admitted to the program still astounds me. As a Corvallis resident and OSU alumna, I still find myself looking for Margaret and Thomas holding hands as they walked from their neighborhood to and from campus. They are truly missed.

Martha (Stillwell) Anderson - October 08, 2014 at 02:29 PM



“ Such an exquisite and impeccable woman! I have been blessed to have met you, my dear Margaret. Thank you for all the love, wisdom, generosity and funny jokes you have bestowed upon me and for empowering me at the lowest point of my life. I love You and I/we will surely miss you. Rest now, my darling. I can almost imagine your beautiful smile and sparkly eyes. You and Tom are together again. - Sincerely, Ana & Scott Craig

Ana - October 06, 2014 at 04:13 AM



“ Margaret was an exceptional person loving, caring and very smart. She was an excellent writer and fantastic story teller, FUNNY! Margaret was a lady that was always perfectly dressed with hat and gloves. Margaret was a loyal friend, we will all miss her.
May her soul rest in peace. Nick and Janice

Janice Bonomo - October 05, 2014 at 06:20 PM



“ Margaret was married to one of the 8 Barry Cousins, Tom was number 2 and my father was number 6 in line. Over the years the cousins shared a very special relationship that continued after Tom passed with Margaret. Tom and Margaret's 50th wedding anniversary photo was proudly displayed in my parents home. Margaret was very saddened by the passing of the love of her life, Tom, this created a void in her that was never able to be filled. There is condolence in knowing Margaret is now with Tom forever. Margaret was an exceptional person who helped a countless number of others in so many ways throughout her life. She was generous of spirit and always uplifting to others. We will miss her conversations, her wit and her wisdom.



The Martin Cousins - October 04, 2014 at 08:53 AM



“ Margaret will surely be missed. Many years ago I returned to school, while in my 30's, to work toward a bachelor degree. I had completed all required classes but math. I left it for last as I feared I could not pass it. It was summer and I had to take the math to graduate. On the day I was going to sign up for math, I met Margaret while walking on campus. She asked me how I was doing and if I was ready to graduate. I told her all was ready except for the math and also I was worried I could not pass it. Margaret said to me "follow me". We headed for the Math Department Head and entered his office. Margaret did the talking and when we left his office I had in my hand a waiver for the class. I graduated. Margaret was always such a special person to me and I have so many fond memories of her thru the many years I knew her and Tom.

kitty Haftorson - October 03, 2014 at 03:01 PM



“ Margaret and Tom were fabulous history professors at OSU, and I was blessed to have both of them during my college career. Margaret was always so passionate and inspirational during her lectures, and she expressed her love of history with every piece of information that she shared with her classes. Always a lady, Margaret was legendary with her mannerisms and consideration for others. Thank you, Margaret, for sharing your love of history with so many students. You will be greatly missed.

Doris Schifferer Harvey, OSU, Class of 1976

Doris Schifferer Harvey - October 02, 2014 at 10:13 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Tom & Margaret



E Wong - October 02, 2014 at 09:19 PM



“ Mrs. Meehan was a very special friend for my mom. I will always appreciate her style and her class.



Erin W. - October 02, 2014 at 12:08 PM



“ Margaret was my Mom's cousin and I kept in contact with her after my Mom passed. I never had the pleasure of meeting her face to face, but our correspondence and her generosity were wonderful to share. I did speak to her a few times via telephone and it is a precious remembrance. My love to her many friends.

Pat Bjonnes

Pat Bjonnes - October 02, 2014 at 08:50 AM



“ To a beloved friend who stopped my heart from breaking and eased so much of my life's aching. This poem reminds me of Mrs. Meehan and her generous heart and unconditional love. My love always. Teresa

IF I can stop one heart from breaking,
I shall not live in vain;
If I can ease one life the aching,
Or cool one pain,
Or help one fainting robin
Unto his nest again,
I shall not live in vain.
~Emily Dickinson

Teresa Spanos - September 30, 2014 at 10:39 PM