



Mary Virginia Brown Pettibone

December 20, 1924 - October 30, 2022

EARLY LIFE

Virginia Pettibone was born as Mary Virginia Brown on December 20, 1924, in Fort Collins, Colorado. Her parents, James and LoVina Brown, raised her and her older brother Jimmy (born in April 1922) together on the Brown Farm, a sheep farm near Prospect and Shields.

She was known affectionately as "Brownie" in high school and college, as "Virginia" to friends and loved ones, and then as "Grandma Ginny" when her role evolved into beloved family matriarch.

Raised on a farm, Virginia rode a pony to the one-room elementary school in town. After graduating from Fort Collins High School in 1942, she attended Colorado State University for three years. Known as a "townie", she pledged Delta Delta Delta Sorority. The men were all at war, so the sorority sisters managed without them. She was thrilled to be able to go away for her senior year—all the way to Laramie to attend the University of Wyoming, where she lived in the Delta Delta Delta Sorority house.

Virginia did not earn a degree, having changed her major each of her four years in college. A favorite story was when she majored in music and auditioned for the CSU Choir. They let her participate, but asked her to please

lipsync. Her musical talent was playing the piano. She was proud to own a baby grand that had been in the CSU student center, and returned to her piano later in life with excellent sight reading skills.

MARRIAGE & FAMILY

Virginia met Mahlon Pettibone, her husband of 53 years, while studying at CSU. He served as a pilot in the Army Air Corp during World War II. When Mahlon returned from the war, they married in 1947 and lived on the CSU campus in a quonset hut left over from the war. Their first daughter, Cindy, was born in 1948 and all three lived in the quonset hut until Cindy's first birthday.

The family moved to Denver in 1950, where Mahlon was raised, and lived in an apartment at 17th and Gilpin, near Denver East High School, which he attended. They bought their first post-war home at 1300 South Eudora, also in Denver. Their second daughter, Beverly, was born in 1953 and Virginia started her years of being a Brownie leader and volunteer with Cindy and then Bev.

Six years were spent in Sioux City, Iowa, when Mahlon was transferred for work. The family returned to Colorado for the girls to finish high school in Greeley. After Mahlon died in 2000, Virginia remained in Greeley until 2002. Then she decided to move herself back to Fort Collins, to be near her brother Jimmy and her daughter Bev. At the age of 78, she reestablished her life as a widow and continued to flourish back in her hometown; she made new friends, became active in church, and joined new bridge groups. When she wasn't exercising or participating in her groups, she was volunteering, often for Hospice and at skilled nursing facilities.

COMMUNITY, HOBBIES

A life-long member of the Presbyterian Church, she was always serving: Sunday School Teacher, Bible Studies, a Stephen Minister and served as Deacon many times. Virginia became a member of the Harmony Presbyterian Church when she returned to Fort Collins. She served as a Deacon and was a very active participant.

She was a member of the Delta Delta Delta Sorority and received her Diamond Circle pin as a 75-year member. Virginia represented the founder's vision of women who are "kind alike to all" with a deep commitment to philanthropy and service, and the sorority's shared values to be brave, bold, and kind. She was an active alumnae member in Denver and Sioux City, and she helped establish the alumnae chapter in Greeley.

Virginia was a member of The P.E.O. Sisterhood (Philanthropic Educational Organization), a U.S.-based international women's organization focused on providing educational opportunities for female students worldwide.

She was an avid golfer, playing courses in Colorado, California, Hawaii and even Mexico in her late 80s. She played regularly at Greeley Golf Association and Eaton Country Club while living in Greeley, scoring a hole in one to demonstrate that golf was a game of patience and practice, vs power.

LEGACY

Some of Virginia's recipe for a long and happy life:

- Faith. She was steadfast in her Christian faith and participated in daily prayer and bible study.
- Connection. She was a genuinely caring person, who always took an interest in others. She enjoyed school, sorority, and family reunions. Virginia truly cherished her family and many friends. She and her brother had breakfast out

together on a weekly basis, well into their 90s. She visited often with friends, family, church community, etc., bringing especially good cheer to those who were ailing.

- Optimism & Generosity. She was always one to seek the good in every situation or person. She gave so much.
- Health and wellness. She consumed a steady dose of outdoor exercise, water, and vitamins/supplements. She kept a tin of healthy oatmeal cookies in the freezer and an aloe vera plant on the counter. She kicked off Thanksgiving meals with a prayer and filled up on seconds or thirds. In her 60s, she golfed, walked and rode her Schwinn cruiser bike regularly. In her 80s, she participated in "Silver Sneakers", yoga, and water aerobics (where she was easily the most senior class participant by decades). In her 90s, she walked and rode her bike to the mailbox in her community. Up until just weeks before her passing, she was still walking her cul-de-sac with a walker.

PASSING

Virginia remained in good health and aged well in her home, thanks to the skilled and dedicated caregiving of her daughter, Bev. She was surrounded by family when she passed away peacefully on October 30, 2022.

Virginia is survived by a daughter and son-in-law, Cindy and Ken Hope, who live in Centennial, Colorado, and by a daughter, Bev Winter, who lives in Fort Collins, Colorado. Additional family members who also loved her dearly are grandchildren Heather Hope Wyszynski, Sean Hope, Tyler Winter, Keenan Winter, plus great grandchildren Cora Grace and Alexander Wyszynski. She is preceded in death by her parents, Jim and LoVina Brown, her husband, Mahlon Arthur Pettibone, her brother Jim Brown.

A memorial service will be held 1pm, Saturday, November 12, 2022, at Harmony Presbyterian Church, 400 Boardwalk, Ft. Collins, CO 80525.

This day will be a celebration of Virginia's wonderful life, so please feel free to wear the colors that make you happy. Virginia absolutely loved lavender, purple, pastels and all blues. We want to honor the beauty and light we had in Virginia and so, if you comfortable wearing any of her favorite colors, we invite you to do so. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to PCE (Program for Continuing Education). Details can be found at PEOInternational.org. or P.E.O. International Headquarters · 3700 Grand Avenue · Des Moines, Iowa 50312 · Phone: 515-255-3153.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

NOV **12**. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (MT)

Harmony Presbyterian Church
400 Boardwalk Dr.
Fort Collins, CO 80525

Tribute Wall

TG

“ I knew Virginia through the Greeley Tri Delta Alumna chapter. She was a bright light anywhere she went. I remember her being friendly, fun, and talkative. I was sorry to learn in the UW alumni magazine that such a dear lady has left this earth.

Thomann Green - February 13, 2023 at 02:36 PM

MA

“ I was a Sister, through Chapter EZ P.E.O., and I always looked forward to seeing Virginia's smile when I came into a meeting room. The twinkle in her eyes made such an impression. After she moved to Fort Collins, from Greeley, our Sisterhood saw less of her, but she continued to hold a special place in my heart, as well of the hearts of our members. Virginia will be missed but not forgotten. ❤️

Maggie Allen - November 12, 2022 at 11:04 AM

EB

“ I knew Virginia through Harmony Presbyterian Church. We were in a number of Bible Studies together. She was such a gracious women and I always enjoyed talking with her.

Earlene E Bell - November 06, 2022 at 10:02 AM

MB

“ Melissa Badley purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Mary Virginia Brown Pettibone.



Melissa Badley - November 04, 2022 at 12:37 PM