

◆ Hyacinth (Cinthia) Christina Burnham McBride ◆

Hyacinth McBride was born November 11, 1916, in Portland, Oregon, and was 93 years old when she passed away in Portland on June 2, 2010. She grew up in Portland and graduated from Jefferson High School in 1934. She married Paul McBride in 1937. They moved to Long Beach, California, where she worked for the Air Corps in a blackout plant on the flight line—the only person in the building with a window. After the war, they moved back to Portland where Hyacinth worked as a secretary to put her husband through medical school. Their next move was to Great Falls, Montana, where they worked for the Red Cross Blood Center. Their next homes were Washington, D.C. and Bethesda, Maryland. During this time she was offered a job in the White House and, much to their surprise, she turned it down because she felt it would keep her away from home too much. Hyacinth and Paul attended the Eisenhower Inaugural Ball. She managed to get an invitation for her mother to join them, and even made her ball gown.

Paul joined the Navy where he received further medical training and became an obstetrician. Navy life resulted in many additional moves for Hyacinth, including living in Kanagawa Bunko, Japan and Rota, Spain. Paul and Hyacinth divorced in 1959, after which she moved to New York City and worked as a legal secretary. One of the cases she worked on resulted in temporary relocation to Albuquerque, New Mexico, for a case involving Howard Hughes.

In 1962 she moved back to Portland and worked as a legal secretary in a downtown law firm. She wanted to be closer to her family and help her mother as she grew older. In 1965 she designed and built a home for herself and her mother. She had learned chess as a child and later joined the Portland Chess Club and took up the game more seriously. She played competitively and became the Oregon Women's Chess Champion. After her mother died, Hyacinth honored her memory by organizing and treating her family to many vacations.

Anyone who knew Hyacinth would describe her as an individualist, unique, caring and generous. She was a wonderful sister, sister-in-law, and loving aunt. She was preceded in death by brothers George and Calvin Burnham and sister Alfhilde Jacobs. She is survived by nieces and nephews Carol (Bob) Shelley, Chris (Deanna) Jacobs, Kay Cargill, John (Christy) Burnham, Ken Burnham, Robert Burnham and many great-nieces and nephews.

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