



Barbara R McLaughlin

April 7, 1926 - July 5, 2014

Service will be a Celebration of Life for both Barbara and Ralph McLaughlin who passed away on March 27, 2014.

Barbara Ruth McLaughlin was a wife, mother and artist. Barbara was born April 7, 1926 in Cedar Rapids Iowa to Lloyd and Ida Frederick. While Barbara grew up in Chicago, IL she had fond memories of summers on the farms in Iowa belonging to extended family members. A “tom boy”, she dabbled in her father’s basement workshop and photographic hobby. Instead of taking another “home education” class in high school, she finagled a place in wood shop. She adopted a string of stray dogs and cats to the frustration of her mother. Barbara showed an early predilection for the arts as a young woman, however she would wait 30 years to follow her artistic bliss.

Barbara met her husband of 68 years, Ralph Homer McLaughlin, while working at Ralph’s Uncle’s hardware store outside Chicago. They were married November 1946. Ralph attended Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) on the GI bill while Barbara worked at the Carson Pirie Scott department store in “The Loop”. In 1952, they built a small house in the suburb of Bensenville, Ill and delivered their first child, Keith Lynn. Their second child, April Lee, came along in 1955. Barbara furnished the home in an “antique American” style because she liked the simple sturdy furniture styles and “it was cheaper at the time”.

As Ralph's career progressed, the family moved to the Pittsburgh suburb of Monroeville, PA in 1958. Brett Lane was born the following year. The family subsequently moved to the suburbs of Cincinnati, OH in 1964 and finally to La Habra, CA in 1966. While in Cincinnati, Barbara indulged her interests in antiques and took watercolor lessons. She was an active Cub Scouts and Girls Scouts mother. Barbara supplemented the family income working at Vons grocery.

As the children moved out of the house, Barbara went back to school in her mid 50's. She first attended Fullerton Junior College and went on to achieve Bachelors and Masters of Fine Art degrees at Fullerton State University. Barbara's artistic career blossomed as she focused on mono-prints and took classes in art history. She explored sculpture, glass, encaustics, and general "mixed-media". She fell in with a group of local artists that exhibited in a rented storage space. The collective took the name, "Gallery 57", from the storage space number. Gallery 57 went on to formal gallery spaces in downtown Fullerton and is currently located in Pomona. Each yearly show at Gallery 57 was a special occasion for Barbara as her work progressed through various media and added complexity from year to year. Barbara began teaching art initially as part of the Continuing Education system and through La Habra Parks and Recreation. This weekly activity sustained Barbara for many years. She developed a following that met weekly to paint and critically review their art.

Barbara Ruth McLaughlin is survived by Keith Lynn McLaughlin of Alexandria VA, April Lee Elecciri of Oceanside, and Brett Lane McLaughlin of La Mirada. Her legacy includes four grandchildren, two great-grandchildren and two great-grandchildren in the wings.

Ralph Homer McLaughlin was a husband, father, and engineer. Born October

1922 to Laurie and Catherine McLaughlin in Beaver PA. They were members of the local Presbyterian Church. Ralph grew up during the depression in the small conservative Borough of Beaver, 40 miles down the Ohio River from Pittsburgh, PA. Ralph performed well in school and athletics. Ralph's memory for dates, addresses, and details stood him well. He was particularly good at arithmetic. His engineering studies at Case Western Reserve in Cleveland OH were interrupted by World War II. He enlisted in the navy and served as an electronics mate in the submarine service in the Pacific Theater aboard the USS Threadfin (SS-410). Ralph credited his naval experience as a more effective engineering education than that learned in school.

Ralph met his wife of 68 years, Barbara Ruth Frederick, through his uncle Donald McLaughlin, in Chicago IL. They married in November 1946. Ralph attended Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) on the GI bill. Meanwhile Barbara worked at Carson Pirie Scott department store and they saved money to build their first house. To pay expenses he was commissioned in the Illinois National Guard and trained at Ft. Bliss, TX in the artillery. Following completion of studies at IIT, Ralph's first job out of school and service was with Standard Oil of Illinois as an engineering sales representative. Ralph and Barbara built a small house on a deeply wooded lot in the Chicago suburb of Bensenville in 1952. Their first child, Keith Lynn, was born that same year. With increasing family responsibilities, at this time Ralph took the position of sales representative for Ampco Metal and resigned his National Guard commission. Ralph's job required substantial travel in his Illinois, Wisconsin territory. The second child, April Lee, arrived in 1955.

Ralph was offered the Pittsburgh office sales position in 1958 and moved the family to the suburb of Monroeville PA. Their son, Brett Lane was born in 1959. As Ralph's career progressed, the family moved to Cincinnati, OH in 1964 and finally to La Habra, CA, in 1966. Ralph was responsible for all

Ampco Metal sales west of the Rockies and he traveled extensively throughout the Western US to investigate sales opportunities. Projects included fittings for the Honolulu sewage outfall, bearings for copper mining machinery in Bozeman MT, and windshield wipers for WWII vintage DC-3s. He had found his career place. During the 1970s Ralph became responsible for managing the Ampco Foundry in Torrance CA. With changing economic times and EPA restrictions, he closed the foundry down in the late 1980s.

In the late 1970s as the children moved out, Barbara went back to school and attained a Masters of Fine Art degree. Barbara converted the back porch area into a studio and pursued an art career for the next 30 years. In retirement, Ralph enjoyed a respite from travel, reading the Wall Street Journal, watching ESPN, smoking his cigar or pipe, watching a fire in the fireplace. Ralph Homer McLaughlin is survived by Keith Lynn McLaughlin of Alexandria VA, April Lee Elecciri of Oceanside, and Brett Lane McLaughlin of La Mirada. His legacy includes four grandchildren, two great-grandchildren and two great-grandchildren in the wings.

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Tribute Wall



“ *Not a day passes I don't think of you.* ”

April McLaughlin - November 18, 2014 at 12:00 AM