



Marie Rhynard

June 4, 1921 - February 11, 2009

On Feb. 11, 2009, Marie Elizabeth Rhynard went to the waiting arms of her beloved “OAO,” Wayne Rhynard, within the gentle embrace of our Lord. She was born, the first of four children, to Nicholas and Ann Thomas on June 4, 1921, in Moscow, Idaho. Her childhood years were spent in upper New York State, where she attended an Ursuline Academy for young girls overseen by a cadre of French nuns. Never the most motivated student, she often spent her days roaming the hills with a sketch pad in hand as she fulfilled her constant need to draw and paint, an avocation she never lost. When in school, the French nuns identified her early on as having an eye for the boys, often admonishing that, “Mass was meant for the worship of the Lord, Marie, not the altar boys.”

Her dedication and talent in art earned her a scholarship that took her to Cooper Union Institute, a competitive art school in Greenwich Village, New York City. Her eye for the boys took her to nearby West Point at an early age, where she dated many cadets, including one, Wayne Rhynard, who would become her husband of 64 years. After three years of on-again, off-again romantic drama, Marie took her mother’s advice and married her blue-eyed “one and only” in 1942.

Marie loved to travel, so Air Force life was a good fit, although often a little tighter than expected when there were more than three moves in one year — especially during the war years. But as a “true child of the Depression” she could “stretch more meals out of a piece of meat than a New Mexico buzzard.”

She also could be ready to move at a moment's notice. This was all expected of an Air Force wife. Life only became tougher when Wayne realized a life-long dream in buying the family ranch near Lennep, Mont., in 1952. Though a dedicated city girl at heart, Marie adapted, out of necessity, to the primitive life this presented her. With five children in tow she dealt with no indoor plumbing, no electricity, no running water and a 50-gallon drum buried in the ground as a refrigerator — a piece of cake for an Air Force wife! From one who had dreamed of vacations spent in Italy and France, she became used to the beauty of weathered barn wood and the panorama of Montana's incomparable landscapes.

During all this time, Marie never lost her passion for art. Her early training at Cooper Union Institute followed by training at the Traphagen School of Fine Arts was enhanced by 30 years of international and domestic travel with continued study when she had the opportunity. Eventually settling on watercolor as her primary medium, Marie found subjects wherever life led her. After retirement from the Air Force, she and Wayne settled the family in Corvallis, and Marie finally had the opportunity to study under many different masters.

Her academic career at Oregon State University Fine Arts Department earned her honors and initiation into Alpha Lambda Delta. The young girl with the sketch pad had evolved into an artist in her own right who attended workshops around the country, even out of the country in France, Switzerland and Italy, to hone her talent. One of her paintings, selected for the permanent collection of Oregon State University, has received particular attention for capturing Oregon's crimson fields of blooming clover, while others are enjoyed in private collections around the world. She once described her work as "mostly representative. I never tire of the changing light on landscapes and seascapes, florals or still life painting. I find the beauty of nature and the human being a constant challenge, ever changing and exciting." Among her many achievements were memberships in the Watercolor Society of Oregon, the Oregon Society of Artists, the Montana Water Color Society and service

as a docent for the Horner Museum in Corvallis and the Bair Museum in Martinsdale, Mont. She has also participated in many juried and invitational shows, among them the Maude Kerns Gallery in Eugene, the Bush Gallery in Salem and the Portland Art Gallery, and was a longstanding member of the Corvallis Arts Center.

Other parts of Marie's life mirror the relentless energy shown in her art career as well. Being the wife of an Air Force officer for 30 years brought its own lifestyle change to Marie. The challenge left her an accomplished hostess who has entertained lavishly on an invisible budget both in the states and abroad. She has held numerous offices as an active member and officer of the Corvallis Women's Club, Assistance League, and Good Samaritan Hospital Auxiliary. Additionally, as a Commander's wife, Marie served as honorary president of numerous Officers' Wives Clubs. Marie wrote, illustrated and published a book on "How to Set The Table and Use Utensils" which became a textbook for OSU ROTC as well as 4-H programs. She was also Art Editor of Officer's Wives newsletter in Washington, D.C., where she presided over interviews of the wives of ambassadors and foreign attaches.

With all of these other interests, Marie still considered her children her greatest accomplishment. She ruled her family with an iron, but selectively compassionate, hand, making sure each of her five children received a healthy dose of "encouragement" to excel in school, learn and appreciate music, and become fluent in the arts. Expert at self-help and making the things she needed from children's clothes to slipcovers, she left all her children with a strong sense of creativity and self-reliance.

Go with God, Marie. Somewhere up there you are swirling in a dance with your steely blue-eyed cadet, once again his "vision in blue." Our thoughts and prayers go with you in this final dance; we will miss you, always!

Marie was preceded in death by her colonel, Wayne E. Rhynard, husband of 64 years, and two sisters, Marjorie Miller and Nancy A. Jones.

Marie is survived by her brother, Nicholas Thomas; son Mike and daughter-in-

law Alida Rhynard of Lennep, Mont.; daughter Kathleen and son-in-law Patrick Obrien of Sierra Vista, Ariz.; daughter Nancy and son-in-law Laszlo Dezsofi of Vancouver, Wash.; daughter Bonnie and son-in-law Walter Buhl of Wilsonville; daughter Mary Ann and son-in-law Robert Varnum of Seattle; 11 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

A Funeral Mass for Marie will be held at 1:30 p.m. Friday, April 17, at Most Holy Trinity Chapel at West Point Cemetery in West Point, New York, followed by a graveside inurnment at the cemetery. Memorial donations in Marie's name can be directed to CFCA-Christian Foundation for Children and Aging in care of McHenry Funeral Home, 206 N.W. Fifth St., Corvallis, OR 97330.

Marie Elizabeth Rhynard, "In love forever!"

View family video via: <http://videos.lifetributes.com/53914>

Tribute Wall

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“*Mary Ann and family, I read much about your mother that I never knew or imagined ~ life is such a gift and to be remembered so well is wonderful. God Bless your family through this more difficult time. May all your memories be rekindled as you spend this time together.*

Andrea Caron Chicquaye - February 16, 2009 at 10:29 PM