



## Marylou Wood

December 22, 1921 - May 27, 2011

Marylou Paetzhold Wood was born in Portland Oregon on December 22, 1921 to Albert and Effie Jane (Kensinger) Paetzhold on December 22, 1921. She attended Woodstock Grade School and Franklin High School in Portland, Oregon where she graduated in 1938.

Marylou spent her grade school and high school years very active in 4-H. "4-H Club work played a very important part in my life, the training, opportunity for leadership and social experience as well, plus lasting friendships made my 11 years as a member and 30 years as a 4-H leader very meaningful." Her love and dedication to 4-H resulted in two trips to Chicago to the 4-H National Congress. Achievements in 4-H included many state prizes and earned her a college scholarship and a shiny new refrigerator; the first such appliance for her family. She fondly recounted her work as an Assistant 4-H Extension Agent in Multnomah County when she worked with children in Portland's public schools teaching nutrition.

She graduated from Oregon State College in Home Economics in 1948. There she met the love of her life, Donald D. Wood. They were married in May 1943 and after a 3 year hiatus during the war, they returned to Oregon State College. They were married for 50 years. Marylou and Don were tireless volunteers. In her writings, Marylou said, "Don and I have always tried to do our part in the communities where we lived by helping in PTA, youth activities, home extension units, church, and school." A close friend once described Marylou's volunteer work by saying, "Marylou is always 'just on her way to

somewhere or had just returned from someplace.”

Don was a forester for the U.S. Forest Service, which meant Marylou was in many ways also working for the Forest Service. Their first “duty station” was Trout Lake Guard Station, a two room cabin with an outhouse toilet and a wood cook stove. The city girl, who had always loved family picnics in the forest, embraced their new life and adventure with her trademark enthusiasm. This was the first of many scenic and rustic posts the newlyweds would experience. “I had never moved in my life before I married Don, but for the next 20 years we moved a lot...I had the best collection of curtains you can imagine.” They eventually “settled” in southwestern Oregon in 1958, with their two young daughters. Marylou thrived as “the first lady for the Galice Ranger Station”. In her role as “the Ranger’s wife” her boundless energy supported the employees and families at the Galice Ranger Station. Potlucks, game nights, and birthday parties kept life interesting in the isolated community. Young summer employees, often just back from fighting wildfires, were treated to Marylou's fabulous home cooked meals. It was always important to her that everyone was included. Her story of her life in the Forest Service was chronicled for the Centennial anniversary of the Forest Service.

While living at Galice, Marylou was instrumental in the establishment of a voting precinct for the Galice/Rand area, the renovation of the Carpenter’s Store into a community center, and the formation of the Galice Home Extension Unit which continues today.

Her community involvement led to a new and unexpected career---in journalism. As the Galice correspondent for the Grants Pass Daily Courier in the 1950’s and 1960’s, she chronicled the growth and development of the Galice area. From the latest “big” gold nugget find or the first summer raft trip down the Rogue River, to the dedications of Indian Mary Park and the current Hellgate Bridge, Marylou could be seen with her camera, pen, and paper pursuing the latest scoop. She loved writing human interest stories, as well as chronicling projects of the Galice Ranger District. Her daughters remember hearing the tapping of the typewriter late into the night as the news deadline

loomed. The stories and events of which she wrote have become an important historical resource for the area and the Forest Service. The Wood family made yet another move from their beautiful riverside home at the Galice Ranger Station into "town"---Grants Pass. Marylou commented, "They've widened and paved the road, and we've had telephone and electricity all winter now, so we may as well live in town." These "comforts" marked a stark contrast from the rainy July day in 1958 when the family traveled the last 10 miles to the Ranger Station over a single lane mud road with steep high bluffs falling directly into the muddy Rogue River.

Shortly after the move to Grants Pass, Marylou began the next chapter in her working life. She managed a small, local fabric store that was chock full of the newest in yardage, stretch fabric. Her job soon included "Stitch and Sew" sewing classes at the store. She was so popular as a sewing teacher that the Josephine County Adult Education program began to sponsor her classes. She was courted by the incoming new department store, Griffith's, to work in their fabric department and teach sewing classes. Later she became the buyer for the women's sportswear department, thoroughly enjoying her customers, putting on fashion shows throughout the area, and making trips to "Market," to choose the next season's fashions for the store.

Marylou was a 50 year member of Eastern Star with a dual membership with Josephine Chapter #26, Grants Pass, and Bridge of the Gods Chapter #169 in Stevenson, WA. Other Masonic affiliations include Job's Daughters, Daughters of the Nile, and Amaranth. Marylou and Don spent loved traveling throughout Oregon and beyond to attend Eastern Star meetings and other Masonic events. As Oregon State Eastern Star Cancer Research Committee Chair, a record amount of donations was collected through unique and ambitious fund raisers. Ironically the following year Marylou identified her own early symptoms of breast cancer. She credited her early detection to her heightened awareness from her involvement in breast cancer education. Following her retirement from Griffith's Department Store, Marylou continued

to work with the fashion industry by opening her home business, Fraternal Fashions. She became known by word of mouth in Masonic circles nationwide as "The Formal Lady." Nowhere else could Masonics find the selection, price, and personal treatment in purchasing formal wear and accessories that she offered. Marylou was active in P.E.O for 47 years, initiated into Chapter DC, later becoming a charter member of Chapter AG, both in Grants Pass. She was also a member of St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Grants Pass.

Playing bridge with the same wonderful friends for many years was a weekly highlight. Creating and maintaining her beautiful flower garden also brought her much joy and contentment. She was very proud of her grandchildren and loved the time they spent together. She was a magnificent seamstress, baker, knitter, chef, and photographer.

One of her trademarks was her beautiful and infectious laugh. She saw the best in everyone and every situation, and each person knew that they were her favorite. Marylou is survived by her daughters; Nancy Hart and her husband Hiram of Corvallis, Bonnie Wood of Boise, Idaho, grandchildren Brennan McCommon of Eugene and Whitney McCommon of Ashland, and many nieces and nephews. Marylou was preceded in death by her husband, Donald D. Wood, her brothers William F. Paetzhold, and Robert (Bob) Nelson, and her parents.

Thank you to Benton Hospice, Regency Park Place and the many caregivers (you know who you are!) who gave their love and support to Marylou and her family. We are so blessed to have been loved by Marylou. She continued to teach us by example grace, strength, dignity and humor, even as she died. May she rest in peace.

There will be a Celebration of Marylou's remarkable life at Regency Park Place Assisted Living community, her home for the past two and a half years, on Friday June 3, 2011 at 2:00 p.m. Memorial contributions may be made to the OSC P.E.O Charitable Trust for the Marguerite Scholarship Fund, Josephine County 4-H Scholarship Fund, Benton Hospice, or Grand Chapter O. E. S. with memo for cancer research in care of McHenry Funeral Home,

Corvallis, Oregon.