



Alice Purcell

October 31, 1922 - May 17, 2015

Alice Kipps Purcell, 92, died in Albuquerque on May 17, 2015. She was a preacher's kid with a Halloween birthday, and she spent the next 92 years relishing the contradictions. The third of four children born to a Lutheran minister and his missionary wife in Cogan Station, Pennsylvania, she grew up in Pine Grove, Pennsylvania, where she and her kid sister served as cheerleaders and played basketball with wild abandon three decades before Title IX. Emulating her father (but only to a point), she enrolled at Lenoir-Rhyne College in Hickory, North Carolina, where she received an undergraduate degree in English. A master's degree from the University of Pennsylvania followed.

In 1953 she married a British mining engineer, Geoffrey Purcell, and followed him back across the pond for a newlywed's-eye view of Stratford on Avon, Tintern Abbey, and dozens of Wuthering Heights look-alikes. Returning to the States, they entered graduate programs at Pennsylvania State University, where Geoff received a doctorate in metallurgical engineering, while Alice was distracted from her dissertation by the birth of a son in 1959. Ultimately she chucked it all to move with her husband and son to Socorro, New Mexico, sight unseen, in 1961. After a brief period of mourning for the lush landscapes she had left behind, she threw herself into the life of the community – volunteering at the local library, removing rocks from the future fairways of New Mexico Tech's golf course, and somehow persuading her son and other children in the neighborhood to don tights and tinfoil crowns to perform in her

wryly abridged versions of Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet, and Macbeth.

(Swordplay with cardboard wrapping-paper tubes was a prominent feature of these productions.) She also collaborated with her husband to create one of the happiest childhoods imaginable for their son.

In 2003 Geoff and Alice celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary and moved from Socorro to Albuquerque to be closer to their grandchildren. After Geoff's 2005 death, advancing age and declining health took their inevitable toll, but Alice remained lively and deeply loved to the end.

She is survived by her son, Charles Kipps ("Kip") Purcell, and his wife, Georgia Will, of Albuquerque; grandchildren, Dylan and Elena Purcell, also of Albuquerque; a sister, Ruth Leidich, of Lancaster, Pennsylvania; and various Virginia cousins. She was preceded in death by her father, Michael Kipps, and mother, Undine Kipps; a sister, Frances Spencer of Danville, Virginia, and a brother, Henry Kipps of Williamsburg, Virginia; and her husband Geoff. Her family thanks Lana Hutchison and the wonderful women of Andrew House for lovingly tending to her needs for the past six years, and Ambercare Hospice for easing her final transition.

Memorial Service will be held on Saturday, June 6, 2015 at 11:00 a.m. at St. Michael and All Angels, 601 Montano Rd. NW. Memorial donations in Alice's name may be made to Roadrunner Food Bank, New Mexico Boys and Girls Ranch Foundation, or the Southern Poverty Law Center.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

JUN **6**. 11:00 AM (MT)

St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church
601 Montano Rd NW
Albuquerque, NM

Tribute Wall

BB

“ I was a faculty member at NMIMT from 64-71 and was acquainted with the Purcell family. Her obituary says a lot. She was a great lady.

Bill Blair

Bill Blair - May 26, 2015 at 10:32 AM

JS

“ Deepest condolences, Kip. I remember warmly performing in her musical adaptation of "Romeo & Juliet", set to the tune, "Frankie & Johnnie". I look back on it now as a piece of inspired lunacy which helped fuel my appreciation of all performing arts. Your mother was a fine lady who helped provide that idyllic childhood not only to yourself but to the rest of us urchins who prowled Campus Hill.

Jon Sylvester - May 24, 2015 at 09:48 AM

MA

“ Kip, we are saddened by the news of your mother, but we are also grateful for our memories of your parents in our early years in Socorro! You are fortunate to be able to look back at so many years filled with her love!

George and Marj Austin, 10301 Golf Course Road NW, Cottage A, Albuquerque, NM 87114.

Marj Austin - May 23, 2015 at 10:32 PM

JH

“ Our condolences to Kipp and family for the loss of your beloved mother Alice.

John and Diane Hawley

NM Tech Hill Neighbors and a Tech Staff Associate of Goeff-1977 to 1997

Now at 1000 Vassar Dr. NE, ABQ, NM 87106-2631

John W. Hawley - May 23, 2015 at 03:47 PM

LC

“ On behalf of the French Family of Companies, we express our deepest condolences.

Larry Conte - May 21, 2015 at 10:42 AM