



Phyllis Capogna

September 20, 1923 - April 15, 2020

Phyllis Ann Capogna, the third of four children born to Chester Frank and Leota Agnes Simmons, was born on September 20, 1923, in Barnard, Kansas. Her life of 96 years ended April 15, 2020, at the Chestnut Park Cleveland Circle Assisted Living Center in Boston, Massachusetts, where she had resided the last four years.

Phyllis was a woman of extraordinary talent and exceptional versatility. As a young farm girl in north central Kansas, she rode horses, attended the one-room Georgia District rural school, survived the 1929 Depression and the Dust Bowl before graduating from Beloit High School in 1941. With diploma in hand Phyllis bade farewell to the farm and moved to Salina, Kansas, where she worked as a secretary at the Smoky Hill U.S. Army Airbase. It was there that she met and married Staff Sgt. Henry Capogna. Shortly after their wedding, Henry was assigned to a tour of duty on the Pacific island of Saipan. During this time Phyllis moved to Pontiac, Michigan, where she was embraced by Henry's Italian family. It was there she learned to cook a variety of delicious Italian dishes, which would later be savored upon Henry's return from the war.

Over the next 20 years Phyllis and Henry welcomed three children to their family. She mastered the art of homemaking, diligently balanced the family books with a twinkle of her eye and an engaging smile. More importantly, she maintained a joyful ear that would listen attentively to her children, regardless

of time, place or condition.

Once all the children were past elementary school, Phyllis ventured forth, accepting a secretarial position at nearby William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, Michigan. She eventually became the secretary to the Executive Director of the hospital, a position she truly cherished until her retirement in March 1993. Following her retirement, Phyllis lived the good life, by traveling throughout the United States with her special friend and partner, Russell “Scoop” Stephens.

Phyllis also volunteered at Beaumont Hospital, became an active member of the Presbyterian Church in Royal Oak, Michigan. and of course, lived the life of “Grandma Pretty” to five grandchildren. Until her mid 80’s, Phyllis’ active lifestyle featured daily walks through the neighborhood, gardening, basking in the sun, relishing vintage wines, and endless hugs from her kids and grandkids, and Scoop.

Phyllis’s life dramatically shifted in the fall of 2009, when she was diagnosed with Polymyalgia Rheumatica, an auto-immune disease that would cost Phyllis her sight. Some might say her final years were spent in darkness, but she always maintained a style of patience and grace. Due to her frail condition, Phyllis moved to the assisted living facility in Boston, where her daughter, Peggy, served as her advocate. During the final four years, Phyllis received excellent care, became friends with virtually all the residents, who loved her and appreciated her kind words and pleasant nature. Our family will always be grateful to the expert staff at Chestnut Park.

Phyllis was preceded in death by her parents, infant brother, Jamie, brother, Joe C. Simmons (Helen), her sister, Frances Mc Donald (Maurice), husband Henry E. Capogna, special friend, Scoop Stephens, and son-in-law, Jack Shook.

Left to mourn her passing and celebrate her life are children Peggy J. Shook, Henry E. Capogna II (Cathy), Gregory K. Capogna, (Kathy Stuart); five grandchildren, Dr. Douglas Shook (Monica), Amy Shook, Kyle Capogna, Nicholas Capogna (Chelsea), and Alex Capogna; four great-grandchildren, Matthew, William, Spencer and Elliott. Also, mourning her passing are Kathryn Capogna, Katy Stuart and Julie Shook.

Whether it was a holiday or just a regular day, Phyllis's hours were always full of carefully prepared meals, family friends, and love. Even if she is not here with us, Phyllis is in our hearts forever.

Burial will take place in the Saltville Cemetery, near the family farm in Barnard, Kansas.

Memorials may be given to the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, sent in care of Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home, 2801 SW Urish Road, Topeka KS 66614.

Tribute Wall



“ *Phyllis Capogna*

January 28, 2023 at 12:08 PM



“ *We are very sad to hear of Phyllis's passing. A very special lady who i knew and worked with during my career at Beaumont, Secondly my wife Nancy Kezlarian Herrick remembers Her as a special Dental patient of her Father's (Henry) We offer our loving condolences and send our blessings to the Family. Phyllis was indeed a special lady 🙏 Dennis and Nancy Herrick (papadrh@gmail.com)*

Dennis and Nancy herrick - April 29, 2020 at 03:49 PM



“ *Dear Greg and all family members - we will say a special prayer in Royal Oak for your mother. I enjoyed reading her life story - a life well done!!*
Rich Higginbottom

Rich Higginbottom - April 29, 2020 at 03:19 PM