



Sheila O' Connor Radell

July 10, 1925 - January 28, 2012

Sheila A. O'Connor Radell, 86, died Saturday, January 28, 2012. She had been a resident of Manor Care in Topeka the past three years. Sheila was born July 10, 1925 in Topeka, the daughter of Dr. Thomas A. O'Connor, an accomplished surgeon, and Mary A. Hoffman O'Connor, a concert pianist for several years and a loving wife and mother for many more years. Sheila graduated from Capitol Catholic High School (now Hayden High School). While a student there she was awarded a scholarship from the Dramatic Institute of Denver University, a four week course in dramatics and stage production, awarded to 25 girls and boys from across the United States. She merited the award for her outstanding work done in the speech department of the school and for her superior talent and ability in dramatics. She was also an honor student and an accomplished vocalist, having taken honors in both the regional and national music festivals. She represented the high school in the Kansas state apologetics contest and in the national Council of Catholic Women Oratorical contest. She entered the speech festival at Kansas University and won first place in dramatic reading and second place in prose reading. Sheila attended St. Mary College in Leavenworth on a scholastic scholarship. She then attended the Julliard School of Music in New York City, where she earned a B.S. degree in Voice in 1949. Sheila sang at a variety of events and venues for several years before beginning her long career at the Topeka Public Library in December of 1957. She earned her Master's degree in Library Science from the University of Denver and was named head of the

Children's Department in 1960. Upon her retirement in 1988, after almost 30 years of service, there was a wonderful article in the newspaper detailing her devotion to her job and the people's lives she had touched, especially those of children. Under her guidance, the Children's Department evolved as did changes in society. The library remained a popular place for Topeka children, due in no small part, to the ongoing efforts of Sheila and her staff to expand services and opportunities for the young clientel. It was estimated by the library director, James Marvin, that she reached over 100,000 children during her three decades of service. The library hosted a retirement party in her honor, complete with songs written especially for her and sung to well known Irish tunes. Sheila and Clarence "Doc" Radell were united in marriage October 31, 1964 at Holy Name Catholic Church where they were parishioners. They enjoyed horse races, fishing, gardening and spending time with family and friends. They were deeply devoted and very much in love until his death in 2002. Survivors include her nephews, Tom Murry and his wife, Hildace, and Tom O'Brien and his children, Eirin and Kate and Kate's daughter, Makannah. She was preceded in death by her parents; her husband; two sisters, Mary Murry and Patricia "Pat" O'Brien. Family will greet friends from 9 to 10 a.m. Saturday at Mater Dei Holy Name Church, where a parish rosary will be prayed at 9:30 a.m. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 10 a.m. at the Church. Burial will follow in Mount Calvary Cemetery. Please consider a contribution in Sheila's memory to Mater Dei Holy Name Church, sent in care of Kevin Brennan Family Funeral Home, 2801 SW Urish Road, Topeka KS 66614.

Tribute Wall



“ *Sheila O' Connor Radell*

January 28, 2023 at 12:08 PM



“ *To the family of Sheila,
We send our condolences to you on the loss of Sheila, our wonderful aunt.
We felt so blessed that our Uncle Clarence had married Sheila because she took such a positively keen interest in our lives and was always kind to us. Her musical talent was awe inspiring! I will never forget the beautiful sound of Aunt Sheila's voice when she was singing in church, her home, or ours. Nor in her interest in sharing the books she was reading and her favorite authors. Aunt Sheila was particularly interested in learning about the books we were reading to our children and frequently knew more about the authors than we did! How fortunate the youngest patrons of the Topeka Public Library were to have our Aunt Sheila responsible for the Children's Division. Her legacy will live on in their minds and hearts.*

Cecelia (Cisty) Hund-Reid and family

Cecelia Hund-Reid - February 02, 2012 at 09:09 PM

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“ To the Family of Sheila--My husband was a dining room table mate to Sheila during one of his rehab periods at Manor Care. Often I would go to sit with him during the supper meal. Sheila was a very gracious individual. She spoke lovingly of her departed husband on several occasions and it was obvious this was a special relationship. She was always concerned about others and it was obvious that she was a woman of "culture". She obviously was also a very modest woman because I had no idea of all of her accomplishments and it would have been nice to have talked about some of the things that would have been of interest to her. I know there is rejoicing because she is now with the love of her life in heaven but I can only imagine the feelings of loss with her departure. Our thoughts and prayers are with those of you in her extended family.

Fran and Russ - February 02, 2012 at 12:31 PM