



Katherine (Kay) Cushing Noble October 31, 1904 ~ December 15, 2011

## **OBITUARY**

Katherine Cushing Noble (Kay) of Maine and Connecticut is now and forever listening to the sweet orchestra of songbirds, sipping steamy tea, and enjoying the heavenly scent of flowers eternally blooming. At the extraordinary age of 107, she passed away at the Masonicare Health Center in Wallingford, CT on December 15, after a last squeeze of the hand from her sons, Peter and Wendell, and gentle farewells from her daughters-in-law, Ann and Mary. Kay was born on Halloween in 1904 to Andre Richmond Cushing and Louise Pomeroy Cushing. She grew up in a lumber camp in northern Maine and had a bear for a pet. Her father worked in the lumber industry and she spent her childhood

days outside, developing her lifelong love of flowers, birds, and nature. After graduating from a business school, she went to work as a bank teller where she enjoyed dealing with figures and helping customers. She met and married Wendell (Pat) Phillips Noble, her brother's roommate from the University of Maine. Pat came from an Aroostook potato farming family and worked as a fire warden during the summers. In 1929, they honeymooned at his fire tower on Allagash Mountain and then moved to Connecticut where he would start a long career at Travelers Insurance. Their values were formed by the Depression and World War II. Kay made soap from animal fat left over from cooking and clothing from cotton print grain sacks. Because she couldn't find a job and they still owed money for Pat's education, she put cots in the living room and took in boarders to help make ends meet. They never wasted anything and this frugality clearly made an impression on their sons. Kay was always a

vibrant part of every community she graced. She volunteered as a Cub Scout den mother, Sunday school teacher, PTA member, Red Cross helper and librarian. She worked church rummage sales and suppers and gave tours and talks at the Roaring Brook Nature Center. Neighborhood teens and even adults would all find their way to Kay's house, seeking sage advice, sweet cookies, or just a comforting hand. She and her two sons survived the Hartford Circus Fire of 1944. Upon hearing that the tent was on fire, she seemingly calmly handed one boy to a family friend and slid down a tent pole from the top of the bleachers and climbed over an animal chute with the other. Although many people died that day, the Nobles were all relieved to be safely reunited hours later. Kay survived three

different bouts with cancer. After a successful radical mastectomy in her 70's, she went on to outlive several of her doctors. When Pat retired in 1970, they spent the next 16 years traveling to all 50 US states, and countries all over the world, making friends on every trip. In 1985 they were one of the first residents of the newly opened Ashlar Village. They immediately involved themselves in this new community, volunteering at the reception desk, delivering prescriptions, tending flowers around their residence, planting vegetables in a community garden area, and installing and monitoring blue bird houses all over campus. They had been married for 71 years when Pat passed away at Ashlar in May 2000. Kay has variously attributed her long life to a positive attitude, a stubborn disposition, a loving home, the wonderful staff at Ashlar, and a good glass of port before bed. Her five grandchildren (Deborah Noble, Martha Hanawalt, Douglas Noble, Rebecca Wright, and Tom Noble) will pass on to her great-grandchildren their loving memories of Gaga growing plants, feeding birds, wearing blue, reading, painting, traveling, cooking, and driving the powder-blue bug. When life seems difficult, her simple philosophy will bring us perspective, 'this too shall pass.' We will always remember that she taught us to appreciate chirping chickadees, spiced gooseberry jam, perfectly frosted Christmas sugar cookies, the escape of a good book, and the nooks and crannies of a hot buttered English muffin. From the woods of Maine to the insurance city of Hartford, from the wooded neighborhoods of Canton to the friendly campus of Ashlar Village, Kay Was Loved. In memory of Kay, charitable donations can be made to: Masonicare Home Health and Hospice, 33 North Plains Industrial Rd, Wallingford, CT 06492

Arrangements in care of BEECHER & BENNETT, 2300 WHITNEY AVE, HAMDEN, CT.