

Phyllis M Larsen
1925 - 2012

Phyllis Mae Larsen was born on August 8th, 1925 in Chicago, IL, the daughter of Paul and Margaret Larsen. She spent her early life in 5 different states including CA. At the age of 16, she moved to sunny CA where she went on to graduate from San Leandro High School. Phyllis earned her BA degree in Home Economics from Coe College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, a small liberal arts college back in a time when women did not regularly attend college or universities. When she finished college, she started teaching in Iowa where she was a principal for a small high school and later taught in Portland, OR. In the 1950's she ventured to San Francisco, her favorite city, and made that her permanent home.

Phyllis was very proud of her accomplishment of earning her degree from Coe College and continued to support the college throughout her whole life. She also made some life-long friends. Her college education in Home Economics laid the foundation for a life-long career in food, cooking and recipe developing. Her accomplishments include a favorite early job in the PR Division of General Foods Corporation, traveling the 11 Western States contacting chefs, food managers and giving cooking demonstrations for school lunch employees. She ended up landing her "perfect job" which was for Ghirardelli Chocolate Company for over 20 years, from which she retired. She created recipes and leaflets, as well as chocolate labels - many of them still on the packages. Phyllis said in her San Francisco Professional Food Organization Blog: "My greatest achievement was supervising the Ghirardelli Chocolate Manufactory, soda fountain and candy shop in Ghirardelli Square. I set up the customer self-service system, developed gift items, supervised union employees, created new fountain items, etc. She continued her success by writing the Ghirardelli Original Cookbook which sold 200,000 copies.

Even after retirement, she continued to work as a Food Consultant. She developed recipes for companies to increase the sales of their products. She would also create recipes and write articles accompanying them with her original water color paintings. They were published in the Safeway Select Magazine and The San Francisco Chronicles, etc. She has been a member of the San Francisco Professional Food Society since 1985 and was an active member on the program committee. She loved entertaining and was known as a good hostess, having large dinner parties in her apartment overlooking San Francisco.

Phyllis was an amazing artist, first mastering oil painting, then water color and then photography. If you have ever visited her apartment you will know that there was probably not an inch of space left on her walls as she had painted so many beautiful pictures for herself and others to admire.

Phyllis was a part of many clubs and activity groups: The Professional Food Organization (home economics club), a photography club, the Diamond Senior Center and the San Francisco Aquatic Park teaching water therapy. When she wasn't busy

being a Food Consultant and active in all these clubs she enjoyed theatre, symphonies, art museums, etc. Being an artist herself, she enjoyed viewing other peoples art as well. She even participated in acting as a part of her church theatre group. Having traveled to Turkey, Europe and throughout the United States, Phyllis was a wordily person who enjoyed international food and culture. She absolutely love flowers and it was her wish to be surrounded with flowers today. It was also her wish that each of you bring home some flowers on your way out today.

With her faith always being a very important part of her life, she was a member of the Calvary Presbyterian Church for 46 years. She made so many loving and dear friends throughout the years and was very active in church groups and activities.

Phyllis passed away peacefully in her sleep at home on November 9th, 2012. Surviving are sister Lynne Evers, brother Quentin Larsen and nieces Anne Hopwood, Connie Moore, Vicky Larsen, her grandniece Morgan Hopwood, and her adopted niece Susie White, who not only was a dear friend but part of the family.

Here are just a few stores we will remember her by: Anne her niece said "A couple of my fondest memories were: I remember Aunt Phyllis getting off the plane in Portland when she came to visit all of us in the 1970's when I was a child. It was always so exciting and that was back in the day where you could actually sit right at the gate and greet her when she arrived. She always brought me at one present, if not more. I also remember when her cookbook was published she made one of her recipes at Grandma's house: Chocolate Chili! How could I forgot that for the rest of my life? It was good chili too.

Phyllis was a very special sister. As the baby of the family, I had this older sister that always thought that I was so special and I loved her so much. When I was around 2 years old, I called her "Foofis" because I was unable to pronounce her name. I remember once Phyllis was in a fashion show modeling clothes for an audience and I was in the audience and said loudly "Hi Foofis!" And everybody laughed.

I think the city of San Francisco loved Phyllis has much as Phyllis loved the city. She will be missed by her family and friends but for now we are saying goodbye.