



Sylvia Lane Sheaks Moore

February 15, 1926 - September 30, 2020

Sylvia Lane Sheaks Moore, after a long and fulfilling life, passed away peacefully at the Brunk House at the Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community (VMRC) in Harrisonburg on Wednesday, September 30. Sylvia was the daughter of Earl Leroy Sheaks and Eugenia ("Jeanie") Rebecca Rice Sheaks. She was born on February 15, 1926 in Gary, Indiana where her father, an engineer, was working in construction. She grew up in New Market, Virginia, the home town of her mother, where her family had returned during the years of the Great Depression. Following her graduation from New Market High School in 1944, she attended Mary Washington College in Fredericksburg earning a Bachelor's Degree in English in 1948. She then taught for four years at New Market High School. She met her future husband, Joseph ("Joe") Price Moore, Jr. of Tenth Legion at a dance, They were married on August 6, 1949 at the St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in New Market. Like many women of her generation during the post-war period, she quit her job to have children and become a homemaker. Sylvia and Joe reared their four children in a modern ranch-style house they had designed and built themselves on a hill with a view of the Massanutten Mountain near Joe's father's Shenandoah River farm north of New Market. She dubbed their home "Ravenspur" from a geographical reference that had tickled her romantic fancy in one of the history plays by William Shakespeare. After Joe suffered a farming accident and became disabled, Sylvia prepared herself educationally to return to teaching work. She attended night school at Madison College in

Harrisonburg and earned her Master's Degree in Education in 1968. Her Rockingham County educational career was an extensive and distinguished one. She worked for seven years as a reading teacher at the Tenth Legion and Plains Elementary Schools. She was a member of an outreach program to teach the children of migrant African-American fruit-pickers in the Valley. In 1972, she was selected to become an elementary supervisor, in which capacity she remained until her retirement in 1989. She served as the county's coordinator of Social Studies K-12, supervisor of English/Language Arts K-12, and coordinator of programs for the gifted. On the state level, she once chaired Virginia's textbook adoption committee for elementary social studies, and she later served as a consultant with the Virginia Dept. of Education in the development and assessment of the Standards of Learning for Social Studies. In 1984 she received the Virginia Council of Social Studies Friend of Education award and in 1989 the Greater Madison Foundation (JMU) Administrator of the Year award. All the while, she nursed her husband (who passed away in 1978), cared for aging relatives, continued in her loving motherly role, and was the family's primary breadwinner. In short, Sylvia was a woman of formidable energy who took firm charge of whatever needed to be done that life passed her way. In 2000, Sylvia sold "Ravenspur," her beloved home of 50 years, and became an inaugural resident of the newly-constructed Park Gables apartments at VMRC, where she lived for the rest of her life. She greatly enjoyed the companionship of both old and new friends at VMRC, including many others who had also served in the educational community around the Harrisonburg and Rockingham County area. Sylvia was proud of her achievements as a professional woman living in an era of widespread gender discrimination. She was an active member of the Harrisonburg chapters of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) and Delta Kappa Gamma. She voted mostly for Democratic candidates and supported the efforts of feminists to pass an Equal Rights Amendment. She confided shortly before her death that she regretted not having lived long enough to see a woman elected President. Sylvia's passion for teaching is reflected in

the Latin words she chose for the epitaph to be engraved on her tombstone: Docendo Discimus (by teaching, we learn). During her long retirement years, Sylvia traveled extensively - visiting China, Europe, Egypt, Brazil, Iceland, Mexico and the Caribbean for an amazing grand total of 24 countries. She taught English with Global Volunteers to children at schools in Poland, Crete and Turkey. Along with her foreign travels, she enjoyed spending her summers and autumns visiting the three of her children who had settled in New England. Sylvia was able to achieve two particular longtime travel goals: In 1984, accompanied by her son Jay, she retraced the route taken by her great-great grandfather from Illinois to California by wagon train on the Gold Rush in 1849 using the diary passed down in the family. In 2011, along with her daughter Mimi, she visited the Midwestern sites associated with the Laura Ingalls Wilder "Little House" series of books that she had loved since her childhood and had read to her own children when they were little. In retirement, Sylvia kept active in civic and community affairs - serving on the Board of Directors of the Shenandoah Memorial Hospital in Woodstock and of the Shenandoah Valley Bach Festival. At VMRC, she served on various committees and was for one year the president of the residents' council. Sylvia enjoyed literature and theater. Around the family dinner table, she liked to recite the poems of Longfellow, which she had learned by heart from her grandfather Rice, and the rhymes of the Hoosier poet laureate James Whitcomb Riley. Another favorite was the children's poem, "There Once was a Puffin." She was a huge fan of the antics of Lucy, Linus and Charlie Brown in the Peanuts comic strip. During her two decades at VMRC, Sylvia spent many productive hours at her antique roll-top desk working on family genealogy and history and organizing the extensive collection of Rice and House family archives that she had inherited from her mother. From some of her research, she prepared and gave a lecture about the Rice family's former Civil War era home, "Stanley Hall," in New Market. Sylvia was an avid flower gardener and a charter member and president for two years of the Cohee

Garden Club in New Market. While residing at VMRC she started an adopt-a-plot resident gardening program, maintaining her own flower bed outside near her apartment's entrance until she was 88. Religion was another important part of Sylvia's long life. She was a devoted member of Reformation Lutheran Church in New Market, where she served one year as president of the congregation and two three-year terms on the church council. She co-chaired the Bicentennial Committee in 1990 and was also the chair of the Music and Worship Team in charge of designing the church's stained glass windows. She continued attending church services in New Market as long as her health enabled her. Sylvia was immensely proud of how her four children had each achieved an advanced degree in their respective academic and professional fields. She was only sorry that her husband Joe had not lived to see that happen. Sylvia Moore is survived by her four children: Dr. Joseph (Jay) P. Moore III of Marshfield, Vermont; Dr. Mimi Rice Moore of Thomaston, Maine; Dr. Christopher Lane Moore of Vienna, Virginia; and Dr. Melissa J. Moore of Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts. She is also survived by her three grandchildren: Anna Alexis Loomis Moore, Jackson Kosloff and Lauren Kosloff - all of the Boston area. She was predeceased by her younger brother, the well-known Chesapeake Bay artist and art educator Barclay Sheaks, of Newport News, Virginia. She also leaves behind many special cousins, nieces, nephews, their families and friends too numerous to mention. Her children would especially like to thank all the staff of the Brunk House at VMRC for their kind and attentive care during the last two years. Contributions in Sylvia Moore's memory can be made to the New Market Public Library (children's section), Global Volunteers, or the Maine Audubon Puffin Project. Depending upon the circumstances with the viral pandemic, a memorial service may be held sometime in the future. Events Details are pending.

Tribute Wall

SN

“ I've known Sylvia since I was a little girl and attended her wedding. I still remember the reception which was outdoors at her home. I always looked up to her and admired her many accomplishments. We both graduated from U of Mary Washington, so that gave us a special bond. And, we both attended Reformation Lutheran Church. Our mother's were friends, too. I always tried to visit with Sylvia when I came to New Market. I will certainly will miss her. Please accept my deepest sympathy in the loss of your mother. Susan Orebaugh Nicholson May 21, 2021

Susan Nicholson - May 21, 2021 at 12:00 AM

SE

“ I came to know Sylvia as we shared our lives at VMRC. She was an exceptional woman who remained interested in life and had opinions that she was not shy about giving. I enjoyed her love of music; she was always so complimentary of my leading music in our worship service. I visited her from time to time and read stories or poetry to her. She encouraged me to keep painting and doing art. Her interest remained high and engaged. What a gift to have known her, if only for a few years! My husband Samuel and I extend our sympathies to the family as they mourn her loss. She was a treasure.

Samuel and Espinoza - October 08, 2020 at 12:00 AM

JE

“ The above was written by Judith Espinoza.

Judith Espinoza - October 08, 2020 at 12:00 AM

LS

“ Sending deepest sympathy to Sylvia's family. I am so thankful for the adopt-a-plot program at VMRC. I am especially grateful to have been assigned to care for Sylvia's garden. Each plant has a story. She was especially fond of her double delight rose, and I would take her buds. I made mint tea for her as well. I enjoy the tea and share with friends. Every time I go to her garden I think of her. Sylvia spoke lovingly of her children when I visited, but Mimi is the only one I met. May your hearts be comforted by her caring and passion of learning. Lucille Schiefer

Lucille Schiefer - October 07, 2020 at 12:00 AM

NR

“ What a wonderful obituary tribute to such a dear lady. Fond childhood memories of her at the home north of New Market, where she served such yummy snacks and let us play in her flower garden, as well as memories of sharing in worship with her in church at Reformation. Treasured memories of recent years, visiting her at her VMRC final earthly home, as she enjoyed her furry friends outside her window. What a blessing she was to so many. May she rest peacefully as her spirit lives on and may her children all share in and feel her love that lives on.- Noel Rackie

Noel Rackie - October 06, 2020 at 12:00 AM