



Rosalie W. Harkins

May 22, 1925 - March 1, 2024

Rosalie Watt Harkins, 98, of Oakmont, PA died at home, surrounded by family on 03/01/24.

She was born in Parnassus, PA in 1925, but was raised in Hot Springs, Arkansas by her paternal grandparents Samuel and Rosa Watt, while her father, Clay Watt traveled for work. She graduated from Hot Springs High School in 1943, after which she married and had her first son, Frederick Mark Palmer in 1944. She later joined her mother, Anna Salome Sweeney to live in Pittsburgh in 1953, and to work on the tow boats of Pittsburgh's rivers and the Mississippi river. In 1955 she married John Harkins, a boiler engineer on the boat.

Having been raised by her grandparents as an only child, Rosalie said she knew she was unlike many of the little girls in her class. When asked what her favorite color was, she explained that it was hard for her to decide between brown and black. Her answer greatly annoyed the teacher. She had a similar experience when assigned to bring an insect to school and the teacher shrieked at the sight of Rosalie's "golden bug", a large live roach that she captured. She was hurt and bewildered by the teacher's reaction. Rosalie especially loved her grandfather Sam Watt, whom she called, "Papa". She has fond memories of him taking her along when he went to the barber shop for his daily shave.

Rosalie and John had three children, Jacqueline Kabel, (Dennis), Evelyn Zimmerly (David) and Samuel Harkins. She has four grandchildren, Melanie Kabel, Adam Kabel (Ashley), Dustin Kabel, and Clayton Harkins, and three great-grandchildren, Austin Lampley, Mariah Lampley and Abigail Kabel. Rosalie was predeceased by her husband John, her son Mark, her siblings, Marie Francis, (Thomas) John Sweeney (Shirley), Ida Palmer (Paul), and Harry Sweeney. She has one surviving sister, Roberta Ross (William) one sister-in-law, Shirley Sweeney and brother-in-law, Paul Palmer. She was also predeceased by many of her friends. Most recently she lost her dear friend Dorothy Sylvester.

Rosalie loved animals and adopted many strays over her life. She was well-read and could discuss history, geography, religions, politics and literature at length. She had a life-long interest in criminology, a field in which she took many courses at the Community College of Allegheny County. She read true crime by many authors, but Ann Rule was her favorite. She also had a strong interest in tableware and elegant place settings, and a keen eye for matching the finest details of China patterns, silverware, linens and floral arrangements. All who knew Rosalie knew how much she loved Hot Springs, travel, hats, fashion, collecting, shopping, and finding the perfect gift for others. Although she shopped at fine department stores and jewelers, in her later years she discovered thrifting and thoroughly enjoyed the hunt. Rosalie was also pro-labor. She tried to help fellow hotel workers organize early in her work career as a manicurist in Hot Springs.

Rosalie was a survivor of melanoma, colon and bilateral breast cancer, but her most dreaded experience was a severe clostridium difficile infection, after her colon surgery. She was extremely resilient, and despite all of these afflictions, she nearly attained her mother Anna's longevity, as a centenarian.

Rosalie was a member of St. Andrews Episcopal Church. To see a recent interview of Rosalie during her last visit to Hot Springs. <https://www.hotsr.com/>

[news/2023/apr/21/watch-sam-watts-granddaughter-recounts-life-love/](#)

A memorial service is scheduled for March 9, 2024, 3:00PM at All Saints Episcopal Church, 3577 McClure Ave. Pgh., PA 15212. If desired, donations to All Saints Episcopal Church, would be greatly appreciated

Tribute Wall

AZ

“ I stumbled on Rosie's obit today. I was deeply saddened. A whole lot of years ago I was blessed to meet a beautiful blonde named Evelyn. She introduced me to all of you & I just knew we'd become close friends, always. But when you took me to meet Rosie I immediately feel in love. Instantly became my second family, my second home. I have so many wonderful memories of Rosie, of all of you. Rosie was an amazingly unique soul! She showed me so much about life. Somehow she taught me who I truly was & to make sure I was always my authentic self no matter what. I knew to trust this woman look who shel had for children...three of the most loving, giving & intelligent folks I've ever come across. So sorry we ever lost touch. I think about all of you often & from time to time i try to find you, but hadn't had any luck. I miss each of you madly & so sad I didn't get a chance to visit with your Mom again. There are few people who you meet in this life that never leave your heart. Rosalie & family will always stay in mine!!! If you don't know who this is by now...Amy Ziff when Rosie worked for Hebrew Institute my family lived right around the corner on Darlington. This is a blessing...so sorry it took so long but if I have any luck at all I pray God puts us together again!!! I love you all!!!



Amy Ziff - January 09, 2025 at 08:21 PM

CS

“ We loved her very much and will miss her. I'll never forget the one night show of a multitude of place settings of various pieces of china, wine glasses and silverware, that Jackie and Evelyn helped Rosie put on at the Oakmont Library. Sharing with us her love and knowledge of all the beautiful table settings!
And visiting Hot Springs with her where she shared her love of the place where she grew up.
The mother of my very best friend in the world, may she RIP.

Carol Steytler - March 05, 2024 at 11:47 AM

JV

*my deepest sympathy to evie and family about passing of her mom, Rosie. I just heard about her passing. I miss all the great times we all had together. carol, knows my email. god bless yous all
baseball joe*

joe vogel - January 29, 2025 at 04:30 PM

CJ

“ Craig J. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Rosalie W. Harkins.

Craig J. - March 04, 2024 at 05:16 PM