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## Geraldine Kelly Keirnan *WD '43*

Apr 8, 2016



Geraldine Kelly Keirnan

Geraldine Kelly Keirnan, 93, of Waukegan, Ill., passed away April 4, 2016.

Gerrie was the oldest daughter of Ellen F. and John J. Kelly. She always said that she raised her eight brothers and sisters and truly cared for them throughout their lifetimes. Her daughters, Ellen Louise (Bill Noth) Keirnan of Waukegan and Janine Elizabeth Keirnan of Bowling Green, and son Patrick (Ana) Keirnan of Bogota, Colombia, survive her. She has three grandchildren, Thomas Michael (Marice) Keirnan of Arlington, Va., Kelly Monica Keirnan of La Paz, Bolivia, and Sean Sebastian Keirnan of Bogota. They cherished her fun loving sense of humor and will miss her great laugh. She is also survived by her loving sister, Ginger (Bill) Durkin of Waukegan.

She also leaves behind several Kelly cousins, especially Alice Kelly Mulvaney of Palatine, Ill. She had 60 nieces and nephews who enjoyed her larger than life presence in their lives. She will be missed by all, but especially by Mary Ellen (Don) Vanderverter and her sisters, Joanie (Steve) Westphal and Carol (Steve) Wolf and nephew, Billy Durkin (Jen Moore) who were always available as a support crew. We Keirnans truly appreciate all of their generous love and attention.

Gerrie graduated from Holy Child High School and then traveled the country during World War II, loving the life of a troubadour while performing as part of the Kelly Sisters. She and two of her sisters, Frances Kelly and Jane Kelly Kennedy, entertained the troops at all of the continental U.S. Army bases during the war as part of the USO tours. Her stories of those years entertained us all and the trio made a point of singing and teaching us many of their songs at the frequent family gatherings. Those songs are now being sung in her memory by nieces and nephews around the country. Gerrie inspired a love of music and life and a desire to nurture in all of us.

She was involved in the community and proud of her work on the Board of the Lake County Museum during its formative years. She was a dedicated officer of the Ex Libris Book Club, and became its historian, maintaining membership records and organizing the annual Book Club Christmas programs at Glen Flora Country Club. She was also a golfer and bridge player. Her love of reading and education was passed to her children and now her grandchildren as part of her legacy.

She was renowned for throwing elaborate parties and imaginatively entertained friends and family throughout her marriage. Her loving husband, Thomas S. Keirnan, passed away suddenly in 1988 on their 40th wedding anniversary. After that the parties were smaller, but her friendships were legendary. She cherished and remembered them all to the end. Her neighbors watched over her, making sure her lawn was mowed and her driveway and sidewalk were clear and we thank everyone for their kindness and vigilance.

She was preceded in death by her siblings, Thomas Kelly, Frances Kelly, Jane Kennedy, Marjorie Huffine, Mary Lou Karasak, Dorothy Durka and Dr. John Kelly and their husbands and wives. While she outlived her Keirnan in-laws, she remained a beloved aunt to those nieces and nephews as well.

Over the last several years her caregivers from Home Instead, especially Ella, Sue, Tiffany and Yvonne, ensured her comfort and ability to stay at home. We are grateful for the love and care they bestowed on Gerrie. Her beloved Dr. Vivek Arora is also to be thanked for his care over the years that made her long life possible. We also thank the staff of the Terrace Nursing Home and Vitas Hospice for providing final care to Gerrie. A Celebration of Life is planned for May 14. More details will be forthcoming. Arrangements will be planned with the assistance of Peterson & Patch Funeral Home in Waukegan.