



Virginia Frances Sweet

May 16, 1924 - December 29, 2023

Virginia (Ginny) Sweet was born in Richmond Hill, Queens, N.Y., May 16, 1924, to Andrew Stephen Manko, son of immigrants from Vienna Austria, and Francis Mildred Woop, daughter of first generation immigrants Frank Woop and Elizabeth Zeller of Manhattan, N.Y. Ginny endured a traumatic childhood, the depression, and WWII. She found solace in the books she would sneak into her room and read with a flashlight under the covers of her bed at night. She loved to read, and wanted to learn as much as she could, as well as escape the reality in which she found only despair. Although she won scholarships to NYU, and had dreamed of being a doctor, Ginny was obliged to work as an executive secretary for the head of Bonwitt Teller after high school. Her family needed her support due to the effects of the war. While employed there, she met, and was briefly informally engaged to, the cousin of Richard Wm. Sweet. The cousins were both enamored of Ginny, but, in the friendliest of ways, Richard won Ginny's lifelong affection and devotion from June 26, 1946, until he passed away in 1993. Ginny and Dick had been married in the Little Church Around The Corner in NYC, and remained as one, 47 years. They had only one child, a daughter, Darleen Andrea, due to Ginny's severe medical issues.

Ginny was content to become a mother and household manager of the Sweet trio in Massapequa , Long Island, N.Y., devoting herself to her family and friends. Because she loved books, she taught Darleen to read at a very early

age. Over the years, she also taught other children this skill so they could delight in the world of books as she did. She was generous with her time and anything else anyone needed, providing rides or meals. Among many other shared activities, she was also Darleen's Girl Scout troop leader. She loved birds, and wildlife, camping and fishing, and was able to teach and help the girls with all their badges in these areas. There were many migratory avian species on Long Island, and she knew all of them, their songs and habits. Cardinals were among her favorites. She would say, "when cardinals appear, loved ones are near." There were many baby birds, or birds with broken wings that were saved by her and her daughter as they tag teamed the recovery care. Her compassion for any person or creature was worn on her sleeve. She was also an avid gardener, and read every botanical book she could find, giving her a rare expertise regarding anything botanical. Her garden was a haven for butterflies and bees. She acquired a reputation for the vegetables and large variety of flowers she grew. She also loved art, and she and Darleen spent happy time doing ceramics and painting together.

In 1964, the family of three moved to Mexico City, Mexico. Dow Chemical Co. transferred Dick there because of his international managerial expertise. In 1967, they transferred again to Lima, Peru, where they remained several years. Virginia became quite fluent in Spanish, and enjoyed learning to cook the cuisines of the cultures, learn their history, and collecting items depicting them.

In 1971, after a brief return to N.Y., in 1970, Ginny and Dick once again relocated, this time to Sun City, Arizona to be closer to Darleen, who was attending Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff. There, Ginny was very active in the Faith Presbyterian Church as a deaconess. She became an insurance agent and claim adjuster in 1971, first for Cash, Sullivan and Cross, and then Prudential Insurance for a total of 12 years. She retired in 1983. She became active in the Sun City Fairway Art Club, pursuing her love of painting

and doing ceramics and sculpture. Ginny and Dick would go dancing, a pastime they both looked forward to every week. Virginia also had a heart for people with disabilities, and, because she, herself, loved to read more than any of her other endeavors, spent long hours as a volunteer, reading all sorts of text books and pleasure books for Recording For The Blind Inc. in Peoria, near Sun City. She did this so that the blind could be students, or just enjoy learning about places and experiences that would stimulate their imaginations. (Ginny read so many books in her life, it was said she probably had the equivalent of a couple of PhDs!) Ginny also had some caregiver talent which was called upon when her precious soulmate, Dick, had cancer. He passed away in their home in 1993.

Ginny remained alone several years, and then met Walter Kreitz, a dear neighbor whose wife had also passed. He came to borrow a cup of sugar, he asked her out, and after a while, they wed in a church in Sanger. He dearly loved Ginny, although he was 14 years her senior. They moved to Selma in 2004 to be near Darleen and family here in Sanger. There, she actively sang in the chapel choir, went to Bible studies, and visited with the friends she easily made. The first two great-grandchildren were entertained by her stories of the "olden days", and would sit at her feet as she told about her life, her hobbies and her pets when they would visit her, or when she was at family events.

Ginny relocated to Reedley for about three years, where she found new friends and fellowship, and also attended Bible studies. Her physical and mental state were declining bit by bit and she required extra help which was available from an after-hours staff person. After an accident at the end of 2019, which required hospitalization for a skin graft, her ability to care for herself well deteriorated greatly. Subsequent to another hospitalization for a heart problem which nearly caused her death, she was relocated to Evergreen

Meadows in Sanger in 2020. There, being placed in hospice care, she experienced a full recovery, due to a more family-like atmosphere with the 5 other residents, and 3 to 5 visits a week from Darleen or other family, and the lovely gardens of the premises. However, since her condition improved greatly, the hospice care she had received for two years was terminated due to her healthier heart status. That did not last, however. While her heart had improved, her mental state had been rapidly deteriorating and was confirmed, in August, to be caused by Lewy Body Dementia. It was this, ultimately that was seemingly the greatest detriment to her health, as well as more frequent and severe UTI's, and she was placed back on hospice. She had turned 99 in May. Her hope was to turn 100 in 2024, and she was welcoming of the renewed, more focused medical attention .

This past Thanksgiving, she joined family for a couple of hours, but on Christmas, she was not feeling well, and did not care to leave the facility. Her condition worsened, became very painful. Nurses and the doctor checked her, but not eating, she became weaker the next two days. She was sent to the ER on Thursday, December 28 , experiencing pain, organ failure, and then unconsciousness. She passed away at 3:12 AM on the morning of December 29. Virginia's entire family, by the grace of God, was able to fulfill the biggest desire of her heart; to bid her goodbye. All were able, either virtually by video chat or in person, telling her of their love for her, praying over her, and being with her, before the Lord would take her Home to be with Him forever. She was not alone, and prayer for that had been answered.

Virginia is survived by her daughter, Darleen, and her husband of 52 years, Ron Stukey; granddaughters Karin Janel Madruga, of Priest River, Idaho, and Lauren Joy Herlihy, of Sanger, CA, their spouses and a total of eight great-grandchildren; two girls and 5 boys, ages 4-18. The plethora of stories; her penchant for 'tissues' in every pocket, every pocketbook, drawer, pouch, or

any other nook or cranny that she stuffed them in; her laughter at silly jokes; her generosity for anyone to take anything she had; her love of every kitty and puppy and any other animal; her constant happiness from being with people, especially those she loved, and her loooooong goodbyes which were inevitably sealed with at least two commands to "be careful, Honey",all are sorely missed and always will be . We love you GranGran . I love you, Mom.

A Graveside service will be held at 1:00 PM Friday, January 26th, 2024 at Sanger Cemetery, 568 S. Rainbow Ave., Sanger.

Services have been entrusted to Salser & Dillard Creighton Chapel. Memorial Tributes and condolences may be offered by logging onto www.salseranddillard.com.

Previous Events

Graveside

JAN **26**. 1:00 PM - 2:03 PM (PT)

Sanger Cemetery
568 S. Rainbow Route
Sanger, CA 93657

Tribute Wall



“ *Salser & Dillard Creighton Chapel created a Webcast in memory of Virginia Frances Sweet*



Salser & Dillard Creighton Chapel - January 22, 2024 at 04:56 PM



“ *Salser & Dillard Creighton Chapel created a Tribute Video in memory of Virginia Frances Sweet*



Salser & Dillard Creighton Chapel - January 22, 2024 at 12:48 PM