OBITUARY OF BETTY G. PFANNERSTILL

Betty Blythe Gill Pfannerstill, 90, most recently of Louisville, passed away Tuesday, December 30, 2014, after a brief illness.

Born in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, on September 17, 1924, to Harriette Hilton Gill and Colonel Dewey B. Gill, Betty had three brothers, two of whom were pilots in World War II (Tom Gill and Bill Gill), and both of whom perished when the planes they were piloting were felled by enemy fire. Just six weeks apart, the deaths of her brothers devastated her, interrupting her literature studies at University of Wisconsin in Madison.

Because she lost her brothers when she was just 20, Betty developed a deep appreciation for the simple things in life: love, family, health and giving back. She also developed many talents and diverse hobbies, including expert bread baker, cookie maker and ice skater. During the long, frigid winters in Wisconsin when her children were young, she was a prolific knitter, producing hundreds of items, including mittens, scarves, sweaters, and hats for family and friends.

When she and her family moved to Bowling Green in 1964, she became a member of Briarwood Homemakers and Garden Clubs, joined the Indian Hills Country Club bowling league, attended writing classes at WKU, and "adopted" and regularly visited several elderly neighbors. For many years, she also served as First Reader at The First Church of Christ, Scientist.

Additionally, Betty was a recycling pioneer. Beginning in the early 1970s, much to the chagrin of her teenage children, she routinely walked and rode her bicycle around the subdivision to pick up bottles, cans and newspapers and later drove them to recycling centers. Once her children left home for college and city recycling programs were implemented, Betty became a bookkeeper at Indian Hills Country Club, where she and her family were members and where they all enjoyed many hours on the golf course and at the pool.

A lifelong pet owner, Betty supported the humane society and multiple other charitable causes. She was an avid fan and supporter of WKU public radio and attended many performances at WKU and The Capitol Arts Center, particularly enjoying opera, classical music, and musical theater.

Betty knew no strangers; she struck up conversations with grocery store clerks, car wash attendants, mail carriers and passersby. Even in her later years, suffering from Parkinson's Disease and other age-related maladies, she enjoyed making friends and joking with fellow residents and staff at Parkway Rehab and Nursing in Louisville, many of whom she nicknamed and made chuckle with her witty banter.

Preceded in death by her husband of 56 years, Thomas A. Pfannerstill, Sr., she is survived by her daughter Jane P. Gray (Bill Main) of Gainesville Florida; son Thomas A. Pfannerstill, Jr. (Ann Schnepf) of Louisville; daughter Patty P. Lundy (Paul) of Arlington, Virginia; and son Peter E. Pfannerstill (Mary Beth) of Wesley Chapel, Florida. She was the proud grandmother of three: Dr. Kimberly Gray Kaye of Gainesville, Florida (Dr. Alexander Kaye); Thomas A. Pfannerstill, III (Adrienne Miller Pfannerstill), of Louisville; and Lauren E. Pfannerstill, of Lexington. Betty's five great-grandchildren include Matya, Dagny, Isaac, and Gaia Kaye, of Gainesville, Florida, and Madelyn Pfannerstill of Louisville.

She was also preceded in death by her younger brother Dewey Gill, of Minneapolis, with whom she remained close until his death in 2000. Additionally, she is survived by her sister-in-law Donna Gill of Minneapolis. Nieces and nephew include Dr. Penny T. Gill of Granby, Massachusetts (daughter of her brother Tom); and the children of her brother Dewey, Dewey Gill of Milwaukee and Dena Gill Hawkinson of Minneapolis.

In her long and mostly happy life, Betty’s one regret was that she never finished college. Regardless, she often expressed the sentiment, “I’m very happy with my little corner of the world.” The family extends special thanks to the staff at Parkway Rehabilitation and Nursing Center in Louisville, where she was well cared for and loved for nearly two years – happy in her new little corner of the world.

A Celebration of Life will be held at 1:00 pm Monday, January 5, 2015, at Johnson-Vaughn-Phelps Funeral Home, 901 Fairview Avenue, Bowling Green, Kentucky. Visitation will be prior to the celebration, from 11:00 a.m. until the time of service, with burial in Fairview Cemetery at 2:00. Expressions of sympathy may be made by donating to a favorite charity, in keeping with Betty’s practice of caring and sharing.