



Audree Lauraine Norton

January 13, 1927 - April 22, 2015

Audree L. Norton passed away on April 22, 2015 in Fremont, California. She is greatly missed as she was the shining light at the center of the Norton-Rexroat-Paine family. She was born on January 13, 1927 in Great Falls, Montana to Lauraine and Joseph Bennett. At age two, this spirited, shy and creative girl, contracted spinal meningitis and as a result became deaf. After becoming deaf she and her mother moved to Minnesota where she eventually attended the Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf in Fairbault. At MSAD she excelled at drama and developed a love of classic literature. After graduating from MSAD she attended Gallaudet College (now University) where she met her future husband, Kenneth Norton. In 1952 she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English Language and Literature. The same year she married Kenneth and joined him in Sulphur, Oklahoma where he was teaching at the Oklahoma School for the Deaf. In Oklahoma she and Kenneth had three children and enjoyed life in the rural tight knit community. In 1961 the family moved to San Francisco, California and Audree quickly fell in love with the vibrant life of the Bay Area. In 1967 Audree became one of the founding members of The National Theater of the Deaf. She performed with the company on tours across the United States, on Broadway in New York City and in Europe. She became the first Deaf actor to appear on American network television with her featured role on the CBS crime drama, Mannix, in 1969. After some years of television work she became an instructor at Ohlone Community College in Fremont, California. At Ohlone she continued working

in the theatre as an acting instructor, director and speaker, along with the classes she taught in psychology, English and media. She received a Masters in Rhetoric and Public Address from California State University at Hayward in 1976. Audree retired as a Professor Emeritus from Ohlone College in 1992. She was very honored and thrilled to be awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Gallaudet University in 2012. Audree was preceded in death by her son, Dane, in 1990. She is survived by her loving and devoted husband of 63 years, Kenneth; her daughter, Nikki; son, Kurt; son-in-law, Gary; granddaughter, Tessa (and her husband, Justin); grandson, Travis; and her beautiful great-grandson, Wesley.

A memorial service will be held on Wednesday, May 20, 2015 at 2pm at the Klopping Theatre on the campus of the California School for the Deaf, 39350 Gallaudet Dr., Fremont, CA 94538. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that you consider a donation to Gallaudet University in memory of Audree Norton. Please send donations under Audree's name to: Dr. Alan Hurwitz, Gallaudet University, 800 Florida Avenue, NE, Washington, DC 20002.

Tribute Wall



“ 2 files added to the album Memories Album



Fremont Chapel of the Roses - May 07, 2015 at 03:27 PM

 Dorrie Paine

“ Mrs. Norton was such an elegant, intelligent, warm and caring woman. I am sorry that I didn't have more time to get to know her. What a life of accomplishments !. with Love
Dorrie Paine



Dorrie Paine - April 27, 2015 at 01:48 PM

RA

“ When Gary called on his birthday to tell us of Audree's stroke, our eyes filled with tears, knowing that Nikki, Kurt, Tess and Travis and of course her beloved husband Ken were heart-broken. We weep with you all. We love you all and are praying God's peace will fill your hearts as you remember all the wonderful times that you had with her. Our Love an d Prayers, Willie and Ron Aebersold and Family

Ron and Willie Aebersold - April 26, 2015 at 02:28 PM

DR

“ Our deepest sympathy goes out to the Norton Family. Our thoughts and prayers are with you in this difficult time. Love to all.
Phyllis and Daryl Rexroat

Daryl Rexroat - April 25, 2015 at 10:00 AM