



Patricia A. Ryan

August 2, 1932 - April 29, 2015

Patricia (“Pat”) Abbott Ryan of Tallahassee, Florida, wife of James H. Ryan passed away quietly in her sleep at Big Bend Hospice on April 29, 2015, after a long period of declining health.

Pat was born on August 2, 1932 in Bloomington, Indiana of Martha Stone Abbott and John Carl Abbott. The former Abbott family home is on the National Register of Historic Places in Louisville, Kentucky. She married her husband James (“Jim”) H. Ryan on June 7, 1955 at West Point, New York. On June 7, 2015, they would have celebrated their 60th Anniversary. Pat was a Mayflower Descendant, a Daughter of the American Revolution, and a descendant of North Carolina’s earliest settlers (The Bogue family who first settled Bogue Bank, North Carolina). Pat was a community leader no matter where she went. She had been a member of the Ladies Memorial Association of Petersburg, Virginia, the Historic Petersburg Foundation, the Petersburg Area Art League, the Women’s Club of Petersburg, and past President of the Cockade City Garden Club. She had the unusual capability to manage large parties and dinners both in public and in her home. Her charm and beauty belied her brilliant mind. Pat’s intelligence was so developed she could complete her daily New York Times crossword puzzles in just a few minutes using a ballpoint pen. She had a fine sense of humor, and her laughter was frequent. New Yorker and Time were her favorite magazines. She was fascinated about dreams and angels about which she read everything she

could find on the subjects. During her lifetime her poetry and short stories were published. She was a gardener who specialized in growing roses.

Pat graduated from Petersburg, Virginia High School in 1949. She attended the University of Michigan, Richmond Professional Institute (Virginia Commonwealth University), Indiana University, the University of Maryland (BFA Cum Laude), and The Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. She worked in various venues during her life as a draftsman (C&P Telephone Co.) newspaper reporter and editor (Honolulu Advertiser, Philadelphia Bulletin, as a magazine editor (American Detective), as a feature writer (The Petersburg Progress-Index, ASSEMBLY Magazine). Pat's avocations and passions were art, music (an accomplished pianist and guitar player), writing, tap dancing, good books, historical preservation and research, traveling, skiing (both downhill and cross country), pistol shooting, and ice skating. She became competent in any activity she undertook. Pat studied art under Anna Dunlop of Petersburg who had been a student of James Abbott McNeil Whistler (a collateral ancestor of Pat's). As a fine artist painter and sculptor working under the name "Pat Abbott-Ryan" her works were reviewed by The Progress-Index (Petersburg, Virginia) The Washington Post (5 times), Saturday Review (NYC), The Clipboard (NYC), Art News (Manhattan Arts, NYC) Artspeak (NYC), New Art Examiner (DC), Washington Review, and The Washington Times. Her principal painting style was Post-Modern Primitivism, a term she coined. She had twelve solo art shows, mostly in the Eastern United States; and approximately seventeen juried group shows. Her solo show of "Sacred Cows" sculptures was featured on the front pages of art magazines. Her art works can be found among art collections in the Eastern and Midwestern United States, Europe, and England. Pat studied hula dancing under Alice Garner doyenne at that time of Hawaii's hula dancers. She became such a good hula dancer, she was invited to dance in a Hawaiian hula festival. In her mid-life, she took up tap dancing as a recreational activity and developed a high competence in the art. A series of historic articles she

wrote based on original research was instrumental in placing Sylvanus Thayer ("Father of West Point") into the New York University Hall of Fame for Famous Americans.

When she was twelve years old, Pat joined St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Petersburg. She was associated with St. Paul's almost all her life. In 1987, Pat funded and directed a historic, period costume, re-enactment of the marriage of Mary Tabb Bolling of the Church to Major General (CSA) William Henry Fitzhugh ("Rooney") Lee -- son of General (CSA) Robert E. Lee -- which had taken place in the Church in 1867. Pat contributed significant amounts of time and treasure to the church including donations of religious art and a grand piano. As a researcher, Pat found the key, logical facts confirming a cause and effect relationship between Petersburg and the establishment of our National Memorial Day. She is survived by her husband James H. Ryan, Ph.D., Lt. Col. of Infantry, US Army-Retired of Tallahassee; her daughter, Dr. Pamela L. Ryan, Professor of Viola at Florida State University and Principal Violist of the Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra; her sister Mrs. John Stanford of Estero, Florida; her brother John Carl Abbott, Jr. of Green Bay, Wisconsin; and her grandson Abishai Aziz Al-Doory of Roswell, Georgia.

The family is being served by Bevis Funeral Home & Crematory of Tallahassee. A graveside memorial service is being planned for a later date in Blandford Cemetery, Petersburg, Virginia. No flowers please. Contributions are welcome for St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 110 North Union Street, Petersburg, Virginia, 23803