



## Edith Helen (Burgess) Bell

May 7, 1926 - December 22, 2018

Edith Helen (Burgess) Bell, 92, died Saturday, December 22, 2018, in Williamsburg, Virginia, after a long and brave battle with vascular dementia and heart disease.

Edith was born on May 7, 1926, to John and Julia (Calderwood) Burgess and was raised on the family's poultry farm in Waldoboro. Her youth activities included Girl Scouts, 4-H, Juvenile Grange, the school band, and church school at the Waldoboro United Methodist Church. After graduating from Waldoboro High School in 1943, she entered Gorham Normal School, graduating from Gorham State Teachers College (now University of Southern Maine) in 1947 with a Bachelor of Science degree in education. In 1965, she received a Masters of Education degree from Gorham State Teachers College, and in 1971, she received a Master of Library Sciences degree from the University of Maine.

Edith married Fred Albion Bell, of Westbrook, at the Old German Lutheran Church in Waldoboro in 1947. They settled in Windham, where they bought a poultry farm, renovated the 1832 farmhouse and raised their two daughters, Joy and Johnna.

In Windham, Edith taught sixth grade and gave private piano lessons. After taking a few years away from teaching to start a family, in 1956 she began teaching at Westbrook Junior High School. She served there for 30 years, becoming the librarian in 1960 and, in the 1980s, designing the media center in the new school building and becoming the media specialist. To celebrate her retirement from teaching in 1986, she took to the air in a hot-air balloon, proclaiming it the most peaceful ride of her life. She was a lifetime member of the Delta Kappa Gamma Society, a professional honors society of key women in education.

Edith and Fred joined the Windham Hill United Church of Christ in 1947, where Edith served as organist for 22 years and as summer organist for another 33 years. She taught in the church school for many years and served as its superintendent. She also sang in the choir, and in 1977, she organized the hand bell choir. She was a member of the Pastoral Relations Committee and served as chair of the Growth Team and president of

the Women's Fellowship. For many years, she represented the church in the Women of Maine Conference (United Church of Christ).

In addition to her church activities, Edith was involved in service to the community. She was a Girl Scout leader for 39 years and recipient of the Order of the Silver Trefoil, director of Cardinal Troop Girl Scout Camp for 27 years, and a trustee of Windham Public Library. In 1996, as a member of the Windham Historical Society, she authored "Images of America – Windham," a photographic history of the town.

In 2009, to be closer to her family, Edith moved to Williamsburg, where she attended the Williamsburg United Methodist Church.

Edith was an avid gardener and a lover of music, reading, knitting, and ice cream. She was also a fiercely competitive Scrabble player. She was preceded in death by her husband, Fred; younger daughter, Johnna Bell; brother, Arthur Burgess; and sister, Ruth (Burgess) Hatch. She is survived by her daughter, Joy Mair, and husband Kenneth, of Williamsburg, VA, and many dear nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

The family wishes to express its appreciation and gratitude to Hospice Community Care and its staff for their great love and support.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Windham Hill United Church of Christ, 140 Windham Center Road, Windham, Maine 04062, or the charity of your choice.

Visiting hours will be held on Friday, January 11, from 5:00-7:00 p. m., at the Windham Chapel of Dolby Blais & Segee, 434 River Road, Windham, Maine 04062.

A funeral service will be held on Saturday, January 12, at 11:00 a. m., at Windham Hill United Church of Christ, 140 Windham Center Rd, Windham, ME 04062, followed by a gathering in the Fellowship Hall.

Burial will be in Mayberry Cemetery, Windham, in the spring.

# Events

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**JAN** **Visiting Hours** 05:00PM - 07:00PM

**11**

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Dolby, Blais & Segee - Windham Chapel  
434 River Road, Windham, ME, US, 04062

**JAN** **Funeral Service** 11:00AM

**12**

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Windham Hill United Church of Christ  
140 Windham Center Road, Windham, ME, US, 04062

# Comments

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“ I did get to know her personally for a while. Very educated, kind and a great pillar in the community. One memory stands out: She had a garden behind her house which a groundhog made uninvited frequent visitations. She tried everything to get rid of it. As a last resort, Edith went into the house, brought out a rifle and shot it. I think the community should honor her memory buy naming a street after her or having someone make a sculpture of her head and display it in the Library. My condolences to Joy and the res of Edith's family. If anyone can make it to heaven, Edith can.

**Harry Lee Gray** - January 08 at 11:39 AM