



Eleanore "Elly" Besson

May 16, 1923 - July 30, 2017

With a heavy heart we mourn the loss of our mother, Eleanore (Elly) Besson. She passed away in her home of 60 years with her five daughters at her side. Elly was born in New York City in 1923. Her childhood was spent in the foster care system after the passing of her father. This experience led to a lifelong commitment to the welfare of children without parents and her ultimate graduate studies in Social Work. She attended Hunter College and received her BA from University of Miami in 1944.

Elly married Gerry, the love of her life, at the age of 20. They were married for 73 years until his passing in January 2017. Together they raised their family, moving from New York City to Los Altos where they lived for 60 years.

Elly was actively involved in her community. Mom was not only a Girl Scout Leader, but also was active in the Santa Clara Girl Scout Council. Additionally, she held leadership roles in the American Associate of University Women, El Camino Auxiliary, and American Field Service.

Mom enjoyed lectures series, symphony, theatre, weekly torah studies, and crossword puzzles. A fiercely loyal friend, she had a regular walking group of over 40 years and shared many ski weekends with her friends. Mom also enjoyed a variety of outdoor activities including skiing, hiking, and tennis.

Our mother had the ability to find humor in any situation. She laughed with her heart both easily and often. Seeing her shoulders shake in laughter brought endless joy to those who loved her. That was a trademark of her personality.

She was a natural Social Worker. She had an insatiable curiosity about people

and ability to care for others. She had the uncanny ability of discovering a person's life's story, even on a short chairlift ride to the top of the mountain. The most important aspect of mom's life were her friendships and her family. A testament to her devotion were the friendships that spanned over 60 years. Mom took great pride in and was survived by her five daughters: Bobbi Blake, Jann Besson, Amy Forte, Heidi Star, and Tamar Besson; her two sons in law: Vince Forte and Barry Star; her nine grandchildren; her six great grandchildren; and numerous "grand dogs".

Mom had four true loves – her husband, chocolate, dogs and her family. As daughters, we never dared to ask the order of preference.

To quote our cousin, we "had the gift of having her for a mother and so many had the gift of her heart, embrace, easy laugh and inspiring celebration of marriage and family. Her warmth and kindness were infectious and the planet will spin a little off center for her absence."

A private burial was held in Tahoe City. Donations may be made to either Mission Hospice or Jewish Family Children Services (JFCS).