

Elaine Smythe Cressey-Ohlin

May 1, 1921 - August 6, 2010

Elaine Smythe Cressey-Ohlin, 89, died peacefully on August 6, 2010. She is survived by her loving daughters Martha Lind (Rob), Ann Colomy (Paul), and Mary Burba (Dave) and step-daughters Jan McCandless (Keith) and Heather Ohlin, grandchildren Elaine Vaughn, Andrew Colomy, Jeff Lind, Katie and Sam Burba, great-grandson Paul Vaughn, sister Guinevere Fausch, and many nieces and nephews.

Born on May 1, 1921 in Grand Forks, ND to Ralph C. and Freda Smythe, Elaine graduated from the University of Minnesota, and subsequently worked as a medical technician from 1943 through 1949. She married Donald R. Cressey in 1943. Don died in 1987, and in 1991 Elaine married Lloyd Ohlin. Elaine and Lloyd enjoyed many happy years together in Santa Barbara until Lloyd's death in 2008.

While she adored and cherished her loved ones, Elaine also possessed a sharp business mind. She was Founder and President of 2 For 1 Household Accounts, a bookkeeping and tax service company that Elaine and her sister established in 1976. In 1978, she co-founded the County Savings Bank of Santa Barbara, CA, serving on its Board of Directors from 1979 to 1986.

In addition to her business acumen, Elaine had a remarkable gift for making others feel important and cared for. An uncommonly generous spirit, she enthusiastically affirmed other people, celebrating their lives and accomplishments without expecting anything in return. There were few things Elaine enjoyed more than meeting someone new and, in the process, turning a stranger into a friend. Age, gender, race, status and the rest never mattered: Elaine befriended nearly everyone. She invariably focused on the positive, and found the silver lining in even the most dire circumstances. Her grandchildren sometimes made a game of it, inventing horrific scenarios just to see if Elaine would say something encouraging. She always did, and when the grandkids revealed that their sad tales were pure fabrication, they would laugh and laugh with Elaine about her unrelenting optimism.

A life-long Democrat, she read extensively, particularly about history, current affairs, and politics. Elaine loved to travel and to entertain. She was enamored with the arts, and was a regular patron of the Santa Barbara Symphony Orchestra and the Santa Barbara Art Museum.