



Irene K. Simpler

NOV 30, 1919 - JUL 18, 2013



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IRENE K. SIMPLER - July 18, 2013 marked the passing of one of Delaware's extraordinary women, Irene K. Simpler. Born in the Hell's Kitchen part of Manhattan on November 30, 1919, Irene had a difficult early life, which seemed only to provide her with determination. At a time, shortly before World War II and coming out of the depression, when her family saw no need for a girl to go to college, she put herself through (then) West Chester State Teachers College, graduating with a B.S. in biology in 1943. She then taught at Collegeville (PA) High School for a year.

In 1944, she enlisted in the Navy, where she was stationed at the Bethesda Navy Medical Center. Discharged in 1946, she returned to teaching, accepting the first job offer she received. That was at Middletown Jr. High, which, happily, brought her to Delaware to begin her remarkable career.

In very little time, she felt a real calling to help families more directly. So, in 1947, starting as a case aid, Irene began her career with Social Services in Sussex County, at the same time starting the work for her M.S.W. at the University of Pennsylvania. Over her tenure, she rose through the ranks, ultimately becoming Director of Social Services, which included public assistance, Medicaid and children's services.

In 1958, she married Rehoboth Beach native, Raymond Simpler, with whom she enjoyed traveling and golf until his death in 2006.

As remarkable as her professional accomplishments were, her service to people had barely begun as of her 1979 retirement.

Beginning literally the day after she retired, and for the next 30 years, she worked diligently to improve conditions for children and adults throughout Delaware. Living her philosophy that beneficial volunteer work is time consuming and requires commitment, Irene made deliveries for Meals-On-Wheels for 18 years. She was founder of Lend-A-Hand, a project of the Council of



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Churches of Lewes and Rehoboth Beach. For the Historical Society Board, she was the volunteer curator of the Anna Hazard Museum for 10 years, and in 2004 was elected to the Rehoboth Beach Historical Society Hall of Fame.

As a member of All Saints Episcopal Parish for over 60 years, and member of the vestry, she worked with the Church's renowned Antiques Show for many of its 60 years, culminating with her chairing the project, and making arrangements with the array of dealers, for five years.

All the while, this diminutive dynamo, affectionately known as "The Rehoboth Beach Walker," managed to serve the State in many other capacities. She was Chair of the Board of the 1st State Community Action Agency, Geriatric Services and CHEER. She served on the Governor's Advisory Council on Mental Retardation, the Human Rights Commission, Hospice and the State Foster Care Review Board. Additionally, she was a docent at the Rehoboth Art League and worker at the Eastern Sussex YMCA.

Small wonder that, in 1988, she was named Delaware's Outstanding Volunteer by then-Governor Michael N. Castle.

Irene is survived by a loving family who will miss tremendously her indomitable spirit, her keen mind and her wonderful compassion. They include her cousins Robert B. Young of Dover, his wife, Karen, their children Jeff and Randy, and their spouses and children; and Gretchen Y. Lerch, her husband Dana, and their sons RB and Jonesy, as well as their spouses and children.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, July 27, 2013 at 10:30AM at All Saints Episcopal Church, 18 Olive Avenue, Rehoboth Beach, DE. Interment will be private. Arrangements are being handled by Parsell Funeral Homes & Crematorium, Lewes, DE.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests memorial contributions may be made to Delaware Hospice, 100 Patriots Way, Milford, DE.

Please sign Mrs. Simpler's online guestbook at this site.

PDF Printable Version



Tribute Wall

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EJ

Erik D. Jensen posted:

I had the pleasure of Irene and Raymond Simpler's company when I enjoyed the summers in Rehoboth Beach while visiting family. They were such wonderful people. I have great memories of you. Finally you are together.R.I.P. Irene

October 2 at 8:00 PM

GH

Gayl Hyland posted:

Bye-Bye Renie we had a good trip through life, Thank you so much for help with the Milton Senior Center.

July 22 at 8:00 PM

JT

June E Taylor posted:

Irene was such a warm, compassionate, gentle Giant. I met her when I worked as a nurse supervisor at Geriatric Services in Georgetown. Words of wisdom were welcomed when she would come into the office. I realize she will be missed by all.

July 22 at 8:00 PM

RA

Robin Alexander posted:

Irene will be missed by all who knew her. We will keep the memories of her intelligence, caring empathy for others, and quick smile and laugh for amusing stories and conversations.May she rest in Peace and be pain free forever now....

July 22 at 8:00 PM

RA

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July 22 at 8:00 PM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Irene by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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