

and community service, and with quiet and anonymous philanthropy tried to make the world around him a better place, both in the Connecticut Valley and here in Lincoln County, Maine. Both Fred and Ada knew too well that life itself was too serious a business to be solemn or glum about it, and so their lighthearted humor and joy overcame even trouble and tragedy. A gentle joke was often revered.

We are among the products of their values, together with similar inheritances from others with names like Flynt and Turnbull and Sanburn and Hale. Our prayers of thanksgiving might well be summed up in the familiar dictum of Dag Hammarskjöld: 'To all that has been — thank you — and to what is to come, say YES!'

As a postscript, I read this prayer at a Phinney family gathering in New Harbor last summer and then read sections of Lucile's memoir about summers in New Harbor over a century ago.

Last Years



Eleanor with Lucy, about 2005

Eleanor

Over the years, Eleanor had to deal with a series of health issues. In addition to two miscarriages, the removal of a lung, a thyroid, and a gall bladder, she had three strokes and two TIAs (transient ischemic attacks) beginning in her sixties — not to mention severe arthritis as she aged. She was quite private about these health “bumps” and rarely, if ever, complained. As Joanna noted recently, “The fascinating thing is that Mum looked so athletic and healthy! You would never dream she had had so many operations. She had tremendous will to work hard and recover from her strokes. No complaints. Positive outlook.”

Fred transitioned into the role of caregiver for the last twenty or so years of her life and he wanted nothing more than to make her comfortable and happy. As Joanna observed, “He tried to give her things to look forward to. He began to cook. She taught him to cook. She did the tasks she could do after the strokes. He got Lucile (the golden retriever) to give them something to enjoy and laugh about. He moved the table in Randolph so she could walk to it and then watch the birds. He was very resistant to letting her get any sort of wheelchair because he could see that with it, she would walk less and less.”

In October 2005, Eleanor celebrated her eighty-fourth birthday by, as Fred put it in a letter to good friends and relatives, “walking the full 24 feet of our Randolph living room without a cane or other support. A few nights later she handily defeated her husband in one of their frequent games of Russian Bank. She had received without comment the report of a physical exam which

told her she was ‘in top shape except for the arthritis.’ Summer and autumn in New Hampshire seemed to be especially happy and hopeful; the lupine in the field was the best in years, the garden was spectacular, the physical therapist down in Gorham was hopeful, and the conversation turned from time to time on how best to celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary in 2007. Eleanor's death was not expected!”

Fred drove Eleanor down to the Cape so that she could enjoy her garden there and be close to her doctor. Then in the middle of the night before Veterans Day, “she woke up with a ruptured blood vessel deep inside her brain, ‘like a thief in the night,’ which developed into a subdural hematoma and nothing could be effectively done. Eleanor lingered over the weekend, which made it possible for all six children to arrive, two from great distances, in time for *au revoir* and to join in the prayers of Commendation.”

We all were with Eleanor sitting around her bed in the hospice room. She was in a coma, breathing and, we hoped, aware of the love that enveloped her. Fred read a letter that he had penned to Eleanor that began, “Hello, Eleanor, Mum! We are all here with you — Fred, your husband, and all your six children, Ben, Joanna, Fred Jr., John, Martha and Harriet, Barb and



Eleanor with Mayotta Kendrick at Black Mountain, New Hampshire, 1955

Lhakpa, Peter and Warren. We love you, we love you so very much and we are so grateful for your love for us.” He continued by telling her that she was going to be all right and recalled a conversation about the Resurrection they had many years ago just after World War II on the beach in Marblehead. “To believe in the Resurrection is to believe there is more out there than what we may happen to see, there is a dimension of reality which you can't always see or touch, but it is there. To believe in the Resurrection is to know that

God is a God of love who brings all things together through love. Love is stronger than death. In this love there are voices to be heard from beyond the grave.” We said the Lord's Prayer in unison, voices choking, pressed her hand, kissed her on the forehead and took turns keeping vigil.

We held a graveside memorial service in the Woodside Cemetery in Yarmouth Port on November 19th. Eleanor's ashes were laid to rest in the plot next to Arthur and Lucile. Many friends came from near and far: the Lincolns from Lake Forest, Uncle Will from Honolulu with his two sons, Curt and Peter, Sinny and Birchy Weeks from Concord, Patty Sherrill and her daughter, Becky More from Providence, Tim Coggeshall from Barnstable. It was a brisk, late fall day, warmer