
Mary Golding Taylor

Mary Golding Taylor was born on Aug. 9, 1917, in Robbinston, Maine, to Valerie (Golding) and Charlie Taylor. As a girl she was adventurous and energetic, enjoying time hunting and fishing with her uncle, Rob Golding, in and around Boynton Lake. Mary worked for Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt several seasons while they visited their summer cottage at Campobello. Tuberculosis claimed the rest of her immediate family, but Mary survived her fight against TB during her two-year stay in a Maine sanatorium. Mary has fond memories of her Grandmother Golding's home, especially the still living rose bush. As a young college student, Mary lived with and worked for Dr. and Mrs. Kingsbury, learning many valuable life lessons.

During World War II, Mary worked her way across the country and landed in Seattle, Wash., with S.L. Savage as an auto parts specialist. After a year in Seattle, Mary was transferred to Alaska, in April 1947, and worked as a parts specialist with the Dodge-Plymouth agency; a year later she became the parts specialist for the new Alaska Sales & Service on 3rd Ave. After three years at Alaska Sales & Service, Mary went Outside to finish business school. When returning to Alaska, Mary went to work on White Alice Communications System, a Cold War project, part of the DEW line. Mary spent three years on White Alice, then another two years working as the administrative assistant to the state forester. About that same time, she was hearing from men coming back from villages that they couldn't find baskets to take home to their wives. Mary had met several older village women, so wrote to them to inquire. Soon Mary had so many baskets that she decided to open a shop. The Basket Shop was in a tiny cabin Mary had built on Dimond Boulevard, on the north side between what is now the Old Seward and New Seward Highways. Later, Mary moved to the Lathrop Building (4th Avenue Theatre) and opened the Fishwheel gift shop, which was full of baskets, mukluks and various other Native craft items. Mary employed as many Native workers as she was able, traveling to villages wherever possible; Shishmaref was one of her favorites. Mary also visited Kotzebue, Nome, Point Hope, Wainwright, Noatak, Gambell and Savoonga, Alaska. Mary had the Fishwheel for about 10 years and many Anchorage old-timers met Mary through the shop. Mary also ran the King Islanders Arts and Crafts Co-op in Nome, Alaska, for two years.

When she was 62, Mary decided to make a life change; she went looking for a new place in Alaska to live, away from the city. Mary found some property in the small community of Sunrise. The property had a small cabin and she lived there for two seasons while friends helped her to build a home on the property. Mary lived in Sunrise for 20 years, splitting her own wood until she was 80, and clearing her own driveway until 82! Mary enjoyed her comfortable and memorable life in the woods with her 30-30, her dog, and cat, Edgar.

Mary's storytelling ability is mesmerizing: life during WWII; prominent Alaskans such as Muktuk Marston and Wally Hickel; the Roosevelts; the Kingsbury's; the USS Bear; travels to villages; many friends made; adventures taken; life in Sunrise and more! Mary's stories are cherished and will be missed - Mary lived a good life to its fullest - happy landings always, Mary!

Visitation and Rosary will be held on Aug. 5, 2017, at 12 p.m., with a Funeral Mass at 1 p.m., at St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Anchorage. Burial will be held at 2 p.m. on Aug. 6, 2017, at Valley Memorial Park.

Funeral Home**Cremation Society of Alaska**

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