



Ruth E. Dunfey

August 1, 1927 - September 14, 2022

Rye Beach - Ruth Elaine (Thomas) Dunfey, of Rye Beach, New Hampshire, died on September 14, 2022, age 95. She was born August 1, 1927 in Dracut, Massachusetts, the second of six children of Natalie (Reed) and Merrill Thomas. Ruth grew up in Dracut and attended local schools, graduating from Dracut High School in 1945. During her teenage years she assembled masks for the military after school, and she recalled with a smile that she often slipped in notes for the soldiers. After graduation, she worked as an operator for the telephone company in Hyannis, MA and traveled alone to visit her sister Loyce and brother-in-law Harvey, who were stationed in France. In 1956 she married William L. (Bud) Dunfey, a World War Two Marine veteran and a graduate of UNH on the GI Bill, in Hampton, New Hampshire, where they made their first home and welcomed their only child, Julie. In 1968 the family built a house on the former 10th hole of Abenaqui golf course in Rye Beach, where Ruth lived for 52 years.

Ruth loved to learn new sports and to travel with Bud. In the early 1960s they began to ski: first locally at the Big A (Mount Agamenticus) overlooking the ocean in Maine, then annually at Wildcat in the White Mountains. They traveled to Beirut, Honolulu, and Tokyo as a young couple and later joined other families on boisterous, chartered ski trips to Zermatt. As Bud's family hotel business prospered in the 1970s, they built a second home in Waterville Valley. In both Rye Beach and Waterville Valley they enjoyed playing their

scrappy brand of mixed doubles in round robins and tournaments and made lifelong friends on the courts and ski trails. Neighbors in Rye Beach reveled at their Christmas caroling parties- facilitated by a rented school bus- and Julie's college friends enjoyed Ruth's baked scrod dinners and Bud's short-order breakfasts in Waterville Valley.

Ruth began her college career at the University of New Hampshire in 1972, one or two courses at a time, and earned her B.A. in 1983. She reminisced often about her summer on UNH's Cambridge University program, where she studied history, literature, and theater. Bud joined her for the last week of the program and she was a proud tour guide to all she had seen and learned.

As a couple they traveled with the board and staff of The World Paper to China, Argentina, and Venezuela; Bermuda became a favorite vacation destination, and they returned to France three times on bicycle tours.

Ruth did not travel again after Bud died in 1991. She would never, she stated adamantly, have as wonderful a companion in life as he had been. Her home on the seacoast -she loved walking to the beach and the post office- and her three grandchildren became her focus. Perhaps because of the multiple losses she suffered in her childbearing years, she took an extra measure of joy in being a grandmother. She loved helping to orchestrate family holidays, arriving with a trunk full of presents, her lasagna for Christmas Eve dinner, and desserts from Ceres Bakery. Always up at 5:30 or earlier, she had a front row seat with her Dunkin Donuts coffee when her grandchildren came tumbling down the stairs on Christmas morning.

The family would like to thank Lynn Connolly, Ruth's faithful friend these last few years; Karin Finnigan, her supportive neighbor; her niece Michele Gagnon, who was always there when needed; the dining room staff at Abenagui, who treated Ruth with dignity and respect; and the staff at

Cornerstone and The Village at WRJ, who cared for her these last two and a half years.

She is survived by her daughter, Julie Dunfey, her grandchildren Hayley, Aidan, and Julia (JJ), her brother Richard, and several nieces and nephews.

Ruth will be buried next to Bud in the Rye town cemetery. There will be a private memorial service at a later date.

Memorial donations may be made to the Trout Scholars Fund at the University of New Hampshire by clicking here (<https://bit.ly/3qxH77R>) or checks to: UNH Foundation, 15 Strafford Ave, Durham, NH 03824. The scholarship supports study abroad for NH students.

Tribute Wall

SV

“ *Julie and Family,*

I had seen your mother/grandmother's Obituary in the paper and had intended to send my condolences at that time.

I am very sorry for your loss, understanding how difficult it is to lose a parent/grandparent who has been such a great presence. I know how very close you were.

While I did not have the pleasure of knowing Ruth well, I especially have fond memories of Suzuki violin events and concerts when she proudly accompanied her granddaughter as she played (so beautifully, if I may add!).

*Warmly,
Sheri Vincent-Crisp*

Sheri Vincent-Crisp - November 09, 2022 at 01:17 PM

MH

“ *Julie and family, I am so sad to hear of your mom's passing. It has been years since I've seen her but I remember her kind graciousness to this day.
My sincere condolences.*

Mary Beth Hollingworth - September 20, 2022 at 12:54 PM



“ *Ruth E. Dunfey*

September 18, 2022 at 12:49 AM

JB

“ Ruth and Bud were always an admired couple and when Bud she carried on and supported her Julie in her wonderful professional career.

I will always remember fondly our “check in” conversations at the Rye Beach Pist Office.

Sincere condolences to Julie and Ruth’s grandchildren. May she Rest In Peace.

John/Nina Bottomley - September 15, 2022 at 02:00 PM

PC

“ Good morning Julie... I came across this bit of very sad news while reading the Seacoast Online news. I’m so very sorry to hear about your mother’s passing. She had a remarkable life and now I can see where you got your tenacity and love of all things celebratory and of course food. Sending you and your family a virtual hug. Pat Crawford

Pat Crawford - September 15, 2022 at 09:16 AM

PC

“ Ruth was a special lady with a great sense of humor. I loved having our conversations and hearing Ruth reminisce about her life and experiences.

The quality I loved most about Ruth was her spunk. She had strong opinions and wasn’t afraid to share them. I loved that about her!

She also had the most beautiful hair I have ever seen, which always always received many compliments. A beautiful lady inside and out.

patricia corso - September 14, 2022 at 07:01 PM

BP

I grew up with Julie as we attended Sacred Heart together. My sincere condolences

Barbara Preston - September 15, 2022 at 06:06 PM

DB

My husband (Dr Bill Bradley) and I knew Ruth as a gracious, lovely lady! With Deepest Sympathy Diane Bradley

Diane Bradley - September 16, 2022 at 03:18 PM