

IN LOVING MEMORY

Madge Kirk Stoenner — March 30, 1918 to January 17, 2008

Madge Kirk Stoenner died of natural causes Thursday, January 17th at Marcus Daly Hospice, surrounded by the love of her children and their families. Madge was born March 30, 1918, to Samuel Hynd Kirk and Esther Dittmore, of Pleasant Grove, Utah. She was the 11th of 12 children.

In elementary school, she was a bright student who loved language and enjoyed participating in local and state spelling bees. In 1935, she graduated from Pleasant Grove High School, and spent a year studying design at Utah State University. She then attended W.H. Groves LDS Hospital School of Nursing and received her Registered Nurse Degree in 1939. Soon after, she began a job as a hospital nurse in Salt Lake City.

In 1941, Madge enlisted in the U.S. Army, and attended Flight Nurse School to prepare her for service in World War II. Upon graduation, Madge received her wings. Her graduation exercise was especially meaningful because Eleanor Roosevelt was the guest speaker.

On March 23rd, 1944, Madge, along with her squadron, boarded a British ship, and, sailing past the Statue of Liberty was deployed overseas to England for service in Europe. They were greeted with bagpipes when they landed in Glasgow, Scotland, on April 3rd. As a first lieutenant in the 817th Medical Air Evacuation Transport Squadron, Madge was soon on the front lines, assisting with the transport of the wounded to hospitals by airplane.

Four days after D-day, on the 10th of June, Madge was among the nurses making the first flights to land near Utah Beach to evacuate the wounded. The landing strips were metal links, and they had to stay on them because only those areas were cleared of land mines. Later, Madge would be stationed in France. She was awarded five Battle Stars for participation in the Battles of Normandy, North France, Ardennes, Central Europe and the Rhineland. She also received the Air Medal after completing 50 missions. She flew a total of 85 missions, including 12 transatlantic flights, before her honorable discharge in 1946.

When Madge returned to the U.S. she worked as a nurse in a physician's office in Salt Lake City, where she met and married her husband, Herbert G. Stonner, on October 19th, 1946.

In 1949, Madge and Herb moved to Hamilton, where Herb began his career with the Rocky Mountain Laboratory. Madge became a full-time homemaker devoted to her husband and four children. She often volunteered her nursing skills, working with the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, and staffing the first aid station at the Ravalli County Fair.

Herb and Madge lived in Hamilton for over 55 years. Their oldest daughter Susan, and her husband Sam Olson, live in Jacksonville, Oregon. Their daughter Carole lives with her husband, Ed Cummings, on a ranch near Stevensville. Craig followed in his father's footsteps, and is a veterinarian in Boise, Idaho. Deborah is an optometrist and lives in Hayden, Idaho, with her husband, Jack Jenkins.

Madge was a wonderful cook, and helped Herb entertain many visiting scientists from the Rocky Mountain Laboratory. She enjoyed reading, sewing and needlework, and the challenge of a difficult crossword puzzle. It seems she never lost her love of language. She was an active member of First Presbyterian Church, and especially enjoyed the fellowship and activities of Circle III. She was always willing to help at luncheons wherever needed. Her gift of flower arranging brought a special touch of beauty to our church. In 2000, she was honored as one of the Women of the Year at the annual PW Spring Luncheon.

Madge was preceded in death by all of her brothers and sisters, her husband of 60 years, and one granddaughter. She had 13 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

Madge will be remembered for her graciousness, her quiet strength, and her great love and concern for family and friends. Madge was a dear member of our church for over 55 years.

Note: This information is from the notice in the local newspaper and from an article by Katie White when she interviewed Madge for the "Focus on Folks" feature of the July 2000 issue of the Presbyterian Press.