



Ellen MacDaniels Speers

August 11, 1921 - January 21, 2024

ELLEN SPEERS

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Ellen MacDaniels Speers, a beloved wife, mother, grandmother, aunt, great-aunt, and friend, passed away peacefully in her sleep with family at her side at the age of 102. Ellen was an inspiration to her family throughout her life even into her later years as she greeted each day with a warm smile and an active mind. Ellen will be deeply missed and always remembered for her kind heart, her intellectual force, and for a life that was rich and full.

Ellen, a long time resident of Austin, was born in Cincinnati, Ohio and grew up in Ithaca, New York. She received an AB degree from Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio and a Master's Degree at Tufts University's Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.

She joined the State Department in 1943 and moved to Washington, DC. The ensuing 4 years included attending a tea party with Eleanor Roosevelt at the Whitehouse, learning to fly an airplane, joining the staff of the US Delegation to the United Nations Conference in San Francisco, and an assignment to the secretariat of the Allied Mission to Observe the Greek elections in Greece. On the voyage over to Greece, she met an election observer and the two were

engaged by the time the assignment ended. Her final posting in 1947 was as Assistant to the Turkish Desk Officer in the Near Eastern Division.

Ellen married Peter Carter Speers Jr. in December 1946.

In 1949, while her husband Peter was studying Arabic at the American University in Cairo, Ellen taught History of Philosophy at the same institution. Since there was no family housing available when he went on to join the Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco) in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, Ellen returned to Ithaca to await the birth of twins.

In May 1951 the family was reunited in Saudi Arabia, which was their home until January 1977. During the years in Saudi Arabia, Ellen was involved in many volunteer activities: she was a Girl Scout Leader, an elected member of the first School Board, an officer in the Women's Group, to mention a few. In the latter organization her particular interest was in the raising and spending of money for the furtherance of education for girls and the development of welfare societies in the local communities.

On their return to the United States the family lived in Houston until 1981, when they moved to Austin. Ellen was soon involved in volunteer activities. She was a driver for the American Cancer Society, a tax preparer for AARP's Tax Counseling for the Elderly program, and a docent for school tours of Zilker Gardens. She enjoyed the friendships established through these organizations and her membership in the Northwest Hills Garden Club.

Ellen never slowed down in her intellectual pursuits, as evidenced by her daily consumption of the NY Times and subscription to the Economist. A diligent chronicler and archivist of family history, her transcription of the letters of civil war general Jacob Cox contributed to two recently published books about him. The family suspects her daily swims which at times were in sub-freezing

weather and 45 degree water, may have been the secret to her good health and longevity.

Ellen is survived by her son Ted and his wife Sue, her daughter-in-law Irma, and four grandchildren Christopher, Patrick, Lauren, and Allen. Ellen's husband Peter died in 2010, and Ellen was also preceded in death by her beloved children, daughter Martha, and son Peter.

Donations in Ellen's memory may be made to the Austin Community Foundation, 4315 Guadalupe Street, Suite 300, Austin, TX 78751 or AMEU (Americans for Middle East Understanding), 475 Riverside Drive (Room 245), New York, N.Y. 10115-0245.

Tribute Wall

HM

“ *Harlene Morrow lit a candle in memory of Ellen Speers*



Harlene Morrow - March 22, 2024 at 08:25 AM

VS

“ *Venki and Shubha planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Ellen MacDaniels Speers.*

Venki and Shubha - March 21, 2024 at 07:36 PM

VS

“ *Venki and Shubha purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Ellen MacDaniels Speers.*



Venki and Shubha - March 21, 2024 at 07:36 PM

TS

“ 29 files added to the album *Ellen's timeline*



Ted Speers - March 21, 2024 at 01:23 PM