

J.S. Pelkey and Son Funeral Home

Ellen Megquier Tufts

(January 28, 1912 - March 11, 2020)

Ellen Megquier Tufts

Ellen M. Tufts, (age 108), of Portsmouth, NH entered the arms of her loving Savior on March 11, 2020 at Portsmouth Hospital. She was born on January 28, 1912 to Lawson and Juliette Edwards Megquier of Gray, ME. She graduated from Pennell Institute in 1929 and from Farmington Normal School in 1931. She attended classes at the University of Southern Maine and Bates College.



Ellen was a descendent of William Brewster, Mayflower passenger who became the ruling elder of the Pilgrim church which founded the Plymouth Colony in 1620.

Ellen was the seventh generation to grow up on the Collyer Brook Farm in Gray, Maine where her father maintained nearly 100 milking cows.

She enjoyed driving the farm tractor and helping her mother prepare the daily breakfast for the farmhands. Her first memory was in 1915 at the age of three when she heard the unfamiliar sound of her father coming down the long driveway and appearing around the back of the barn driving a Model T Ford. Her mother was shocked because he had not told her of his plans to purchase the vehicle and it was expensive- \$500. Her dad must have been forward-thinking because not only was the Megquier family the first to own a car, they were also the first to have electricity in the town of Gray. Ellen's mother started her own egg business using an incubator which eventually grew to 1,000 hens. The daily task of collecting that many eggs was not something the four children looked forward to.



Ellen's student teaching experience was at the Red Schoolhouse in West Farmington in 1930. She taught grades 1-8 as their only teacher. In the winter months she snowshoed to the one room schoolhouse at 4:30am to light the woodstove. Each student brought a log to burn. She put a large pot of water on the stove early in the morning. Each family brought a vegetable to place in the boiling water which provided a hearty soup for all for lunch.



Ellen's teaching experiences included grades 1-8 over a span of 37 years.

In Maine she taught in the towns of Durham, Sebattus, Paris Hill, Westbrook (principal), Auburn, and Gray; in VT she taught in the town of Bellows Falls (principal). Fourth grade was her favorite. As a natural teacher, she continued lessons outside the classroom and instilled many life lessons in anyone fortunate enough to spend time with her.

She was a former member of the Eastern Star in New Gloucester, ME and Bellows Falls, VT. She also enjoyed membership in the Congregational churches in New Gloucester and York, ME.

There was a fire at the Collyer Brook Farm and since Everett, her future husband, was a carpenter, he was hired to renovate the kitchen. Their first date included a drive up Mt. Washington and a picnic with a marvelous view. Once the family came along, taking long drives and stopping for a picnic was a favorite summer outing. Ellen married Everett G. Tufts of New Gloucester on June 21, 1947. After a happy marriage of 30 years, he passed away in 1977.



She retired in 1974 when Everett became ill, but she did not stop teaching. She volunteered to tutor Jr High boys at The Opportunity Farm, a home for underprivileged adolescents in New Gloucester. Some of these young men were rough characters, but with her gentle spirit and kindness (and homemade cookies), they gradually looked forward to her afterschool visits as she helped them get their homework done. Encouraging the underachiever was her outstanding character trait from which many students benefitted. In 1987 Ellen moved to York to be closer to both daughters. Later she moved to Kittery and enjoyed living many years at Meetinghouse Village. In 2017 she moved to Portsmouth, NH with her daughter Shirley's family.

In 2015 Ellen was honored to receive the Boston Post Cane for being the oldest resident of Kittery, ME. That was a tremendous blessing to her.



Ellen was a devout Christian who enjoyed praying for her family members often during the day. She read from her Bible daily and enjoyed sharing the passage with others. She appreciated Psalms 19, 23 and 91. Her favorite verses were Ephesians 2:8-10. She was an avid blueberry picker at her daughter Joanne's patch, had a green thumb and enjoyed gardening, bird watching, and tea parties with friends. She loved to knit and made 25 afghans. Never one to brag, she has made hundreds of mittens for her family and the church 'mitten tree' at Christmas. She enjoyed reading at home and on the deck overlooking the lake in the summer. She loved to cook and spend time in her kitchen with her grandchildren sharing her favorite recipes (the most memorable being apple pie). She will be remembered most for her devotion to her family – all of whom will cherish her love forever.

Ellen's life spanned nearly 11 decades and she witnessed many changes in society, customs, presidents, and technology. She persevered through it all with dignity and luster. Ellen always felt that she had led a blessed life. In return she spread His light to her world.

Ellen is survived by her two daughters: Joanne Waliszek and her husband Donald (York), and Shirley O'Leary and her husband John (Portsmouth), five grandchildren: Kristin Whitson and her husband Brian (Anchorage,

AK), Matthew Waliszek (Anchorage, AK), Daniel Waliszek and his wife Kelly (Cape Neddick), Julia O'Leary (Portsmouth), and Colleen Ovecka and her husband David (Portsmouth), and seven great-grandchildren. In addition to her husband, she was predeceased by brothers Earl and Lewis Megquier and a sister Ava Walker.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Activity Fund at Meetinghouse Village, 143 Rogers Road, Kittery, ME 03904.

Care for the Tufts family has been entrusted to the J.S. Pelkey Funeral Home, Kittery.