



Hendrieka Marie (Rinkema) Nelson

March 5, 2019

Hendrieka Marie (Rinkema) Nelson passed away peacefully on March 5th, 2019, at Neighborhood House in Keene, New York, bringing to a close a remarkable 98-year life that spanned most of the great events of the 20th Century, and that gave her family and friends a wealth of music, humor, intelligence and spirit.

Hendrieka was born in 1921 in Enkhuizen, the Netherlands, to parents John and Mary Rinkema. The family immigrated to the United States when she was two, settling in Chicago, Illinois. Hendrieka grew up through the Great Depression and Prohibition, during which her father worked as a carpenter and ran a bootleg still. While doing so he ran afoul of one of Al Capone's lieutenants, was turned in and spent some months in a Federal penitentiary on California Avenue. Hendrieka learned to explain that the missing John was "in California." Meanwhile her mother became a radical activist in the robust world of Chicago politics.

In elementary school Hendrieka began tinkering with a school piano, which led to life-long involvement in music. As a high school student she enrolled in the Chicago Musical College's Preparatory Academy where she twice won first prize in the annual Academy Concert. Upon graduation she attended the College and went on to give five decades of recitals and concerts, mostly on her beloved Steinway grand piano. Despite hours of daily piano practice she also found time to become the women's public court tennis champion of Owego, New York.

Much of Hendrieka's musical life was spent in Cleveland, Ohio, where members of the renowned Cleveland Orchestra were frequent music partners, performing recitals in the Nelson living room, but her favorite musical collaborator was her son Steve on violin.

During World War Two Hendrieka met and married her husband of 54 years, Raymond Nelson. Their honeymoon consisted of watching an evening sunset hours before Raymond was inducted into the Army. Hendrieka contributed to the war effort by working in a battery factory.

Inspired by her love of Russian literature, Hendrieka earned a Masters Degree in Russian languages and literature from Case Western Reserve University in the 1960's. She visited the Soviet Union many times and was proud to have traveled the entire length of the Siberian Railway. Hendrieka was an avid traveler who visited too many countries to list,

but her favorite place in the world was Blue Mountain Lake in the Adirondack Mountains, where she spent summer vacations for fifty years.

Hendrieka Nelson is survived by her children Susan, Steven and Peter, six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.