



Grace G. Cannan

March 14, 1924 - December 9, 2012

Grace Gormley Cannan, 88 and mother of 13, passed away at the Devon Senior Living Center on December 9, 2012. Born in Dallas, Texas, on March 14, 1924, Grace was a woman before her time, an artist, avid gardener, baker and scholar. She was a kitchen table scholar of Greek poet, Homer, and greeted her children in the morning with quotes from the Odyssey such as “child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn” or broke up family squabbles with an ardent “anathema!” She was a fiber artist and spun her own thread to create elaborate weavings that depicted such visions as a metaphor for democracy. She was a baker and Sunday evenings were dedicated to producing the bread for the week using the beer yeast left over from her husband’s beer craft. She was an organic gardener before organic had a label and knew the Latin for every garden plant, lamenting the day that Burpee seed catalog transitioned to English nomenclature. She practiced farm-to-table long before the movement was ever conceived and was famed for her family assessment that “We may not have much, but we sure do eat well!” Long before the Department of Fish and Wildlife created a program for Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary certification, she abandoned suburban detrimental environmental practices of high-pesticide lawn cultivation to create an oasis of evergreens and berried shrubs for songbirds. She studied drawing and painting under Frank Reaugh as a young girl, and later with well-known Philadelphia artist, Mimi Oretsky; when she became tired of the dirty handprints along the stairs of her home, she traced the hands of each child and painted them creating an

artistic mural of a mother's daily work. She obtained a B.A. from Southern Methodist University and later pursued two masters at Villanova University in playwriting and set and costume design; she also sent her children off to school every morning with a kiss and a hug and was there to greet them every afternoon when they returned home. She enjoyed translating Greek and Latin writings, often using recycled magazine sleeves for paper, and devoted her later years to translating Homer with a focus on the use of cloth as metaphor. Grace is survived by 12 of her 13 children and her breadth of talent is reflected in their varied careers: Edward Cannan, actor (deceased); Jane Cannan, esthetician; Gwynedd Cannan, archivist, Trinity Church; Catherine Cannan, high school math teacher; David Cannan, ne Sonny Boy, house painter/historical wall paper replication/former commissioner; Cecilia Cannan, RN in geriatrics; Clare Moore, librarian; Teresa Offner, geologist; Francesca Mihok, physical therapy doctoral student; Alice Cannan, ob/gyn nurse practitioner; Paul Cannan, English professor, University of Minnesota; John Cannan, law librarian/professor, Drexel University; Marc Cannan, civil rights lawyer. Grace was predeceased by her husband of 58 years who shared her love and expertise of ancient Greek and Roman history, Edward Leslie Cannan Jr. It would be amiss not to end with one of Grace Cannan's favorite quotes from Virgil's Aeneid that is certainly relevant to these times: "...sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt" translated as "The world is a world of tears, and the burdens of mortality touch the heart." (Translation: classicist, Robert Fagles.)