



## Polly Drinker Elek

May 2, 1927 - April 18, 2008

Polly Drinker Elek, 80, of Bryn Mawr, former President of the Episcopal Church Women of Pennsylvania, died last Friday of pneumonia and complications related to Alzheimer's.

Mrs. Elek was long time member of the Church of the Redeemer where she ran the H.E.A.R.T. fund and the United Thank Offering. She was a member of the Acorn Club, the Gardeners, the Merion Cricket Club, the Colonial Dames, and active in maintaining Stenton, the home of her ancestor, James Logan.

Mrs. Elek's grandfather, Henry S. Drinker was the President of Lehigh University. Her maternal grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Josiah Francis Fisher owned the Alverthorpe Estate in Jenkintown, which had been acquired by the Fisher family in 1850. Mrs. Elek spent the first ten years of her life treating Alverthorpe as her private playground, visiting every day to feed the ducks and run wild with her three brothers. In 1937, Mrs. Elek's grandparents sold the Alverthorpe Estate to the Lessing Rosenwald, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees Sears Roebuck and Company, who subsequently gifted a large portion of the estate to Abington Township in 1958.

A graduate of Springside School, Mrs. Elek volunteered the American Friends Service after she was graduated from Radcliffe College in 1949. She traveled to Mexico City for the American Friends Service and served as a volunteer

there and in rural Mexico for a year.

After returning from Mexico, Mrs. Elek went to work for American Friends Service Committee for four years. Thereafter, she worked for the Academy of Natural Sciences Magazine,. She stayed at the magazine for 10 years, eventually serving as its editor-in-chief. After the birth of her first child, she retired and "became a professional volunteer-pie-baking tennis fiend" said her daughter, Francie McComb. "Until she became sick in 1998, I don't think a day went by that she failed to make brownies, eat half the brownies, bake a pie, play tennis or paddle tennis, garden or at least contemplate the garden, and go to church or work on church activities."

During the 1980s, Mrs. Elek became very involved in the Episcopal Church Women of Pennsylvania, an organization of church women representing the 127 churches that comprise the diocese of Pennsylvania. She served as its President for three years. As President, she served as a senior advisor to the Bishop of Pennsylvania.

Mrs. Elek was also an avid, if eccentric Gardner. She did not believe in pesticides, mulch or pruning. She disliked formal gardens, preferring wild flowers, indigenous plants, and letting nature take its course, though she maintained a beautiful memorial perennial guardian in memory of her brother who died in World War II. She told her children that the point of gardening was to dig in the dirt, work with what appeared, and hope for the best.

Each year, she lovingly cultivated a favorite elephant ear perennial which she referred to as "our weed"-- hoping it would grow to the roof of her house before crashing over. She and her husband spent hours drinking ice tea and complementing "our weed" with great enthusiasm. Mrs. Elek, whose parents had a victory garden during World War II, knew about vegetables. She successfully spliced tomato plants into a ewe bush which helped regulate the tomato plants' water and served as a natural defense against bugs and rabbits. According to her daughter, the only down side to those tomatoes was Mrs. Elek had to occasionally wiggle under the ewe bush to get them and that was a task not to be done in tennis whites. "Mom was always dressed for her

next tennis game, so having to change was a bit of a pain, but the tomatoes were worth it."

In addition to her daughter, she is survived by her son, the Rev. Hentzi Drinker Elek, and two other daughters, Susie Middleton Elek and Daphne Elek Scullin, as well as eight grandchildren, four nephews and a niece. She is predeceased by her husband, Peter S. Elek and three brothers, Lt. Sandwith Drinker, Dr. Henry Drinker, and James Drinker.

Services will be held on Saturday, April 26th at 11:AM, at the Church of the Redeemer, corner of Pennswood and New Gulph Rds., Bryn Mawr PA 19010.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that contributions be made to: American Friends Service Committee; AFSC Development; 1501 Cherry Street; Philadelphia PA 19102. [www.afsc.org](http://www.afsc.org)

# Previous Events

## Service

APR **26**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Church of The Redeemer  
230 Pennswood Road  
Bryn Mawr, PA

# Tribute Wall



“ Dear Elek family. I was so sorry to learn of the death of my very special and wonderful Godmother. I know that she and my Ma were friends forever. I am so sorry that we moved from the Philadelphia area so early - only seeing you briefly after my father's death. May all of you live as special a life as your Mother, Antoinette Brey###imported-begin##Antoinette L. Brey###imported-end##

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April 25, 2008 at 08:21 AM



“ Dear Francie and Family: We are thinking of you and keeping you in our thoughts and prayers. I felt like I knew your mother from Francie's stories! She sounded like an incredible person, and I know she will be missed by all who knew her, especially all of you. While we can't be with you Saturday, we will light a special candle at St. Thomas More Church in Decatur GA that day for her and for all of you.##imported-begin##Anne Lewis and Family##imported-end##

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April 23, 2008 at 11:58 AM



“ Dear Hentzi and family,  
Please accept my condolences and deepest sympathy for the death of your mother. She must have been a grand lady. Know that my thoughts and prayers are with you and your family.  
with sincere affection,  
Barbara Blodgett###imported-begin##Barbara L. Blodgett###imported-end##

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April 23, 2008 at 10:49 AM



“ *May you find comfort in the memories that are yours to cherish always, and strength in the companionship of those who share your loss.... I have learned never to underestimate the healing power we all have. It is always there to be used for the highest good. All those sleeping in their graves will wake up and sing for joy. As the sparkling dew refreshes the earth, so the Lord will revive those who have long been dead.*"-Isa. 26:19.##imported-begin##Magallon Family##imported-end##

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April 22, 2008 at 05:58 PM