



Irene A. Levesque

July 19, 1926 - December 24, 2014

FALMOUTH – Irene A. Levesque 88, formerly of Auburn passed away peacefully on Christmas Eve - Wednesday December 24th - at Sedgewood Commons with her loving family by her side. She was the daughter of Lucien and Maria (Bernier) Poulin and graduated from Edward Little High School and St. Mary's School of Nursing. Married in 1948 to Lucien R. Levesque, together they raised eight children while owning and operating the former Sim's Restaurant in Auburn. Irene is survived by her seven children, Peter Levesque and wife Elaine, Caroline Higgins and husband John, Paul Levesque and wife Claire, Julie Levesque and partner Deborah Goldstein, Louise Nunn and husband Timothy, Charles Levesque, Anne Levesque and husband David Boynton; her beloved sister, Florette Bouchard and husband Robert; five grandchildren, Benjamin Higgins, Jennifer Hagan, Christopher Nunn, Emily Nunn, Katie Boynton, two great grandchildren, and many nieces and nephews. Besides her husband Lucien, she was predeceased by her daughter, Michelle as well as three brothers, Paul, Robert, and Andre Poulin. Irene A. (Poulin) Levesque was born on July 19th, 1926 in Lewiston, Maine and graduated from Edward Little High School. She then attended St. Mary's School of Nursing in Lewiston Maine, where she earned her Registered Nursing diploma. Being a progressive person by nature, Irene excelled in the area of natural childbirth education which was not widely practiced at the time. She was married in 1948 to Lucien R. Levesque and after some time working in various hospitals, Irene and her husband began a family. Irene's progressive ideas would serve her well as she embarked on the journey of having a child with Down syndrome. In 1948, as was common at the time, doctors strongly suggested that Irene and Lucien place their daughter Michelle in an institution. However, the decision was quickly made that she would remain at home. As there were no schools for special needs children in the 1950's, Irene, at the age of 29, initiated the idea of starting a school in her area of Lewiston- Auburn. In August of 1955, Irene, along with other community members formed Lewiston-Auburn Association for Retarded Children (LAARC) where she served as President. Creating a school for these children was the immediate focus of the group. The Garcelon School in Lewiston was chosen as the site and Irene began enlisting volunteers to advocate for the school. A local Kiwanis Club listened as she explained that "The best thing for a child is to be home where there is love and affection. Institutions are lovely but

few can afford them.” The Rotary Club and The Lions Club were among the groups credited with providing funds and manpower to refurbish the school. One year after its inception, Irene’s goal of creating a school for her daughter came to fruition. On September 11, 1956, LAARC opened the school for 19 children in two classes. In 1969, the school was moved to Madison Street in Auburn and became known as the Madison Street School for Retarded children. Today it has evolved into Pathways Inc. In 1976, Irene was again faced with the decision to forge ahead as a progressive women when her husband, owner of Sim’s Restaurant in Auburn, passed away. She chose to take over the operation of Sim’s and ran it successfully for 14 years during a time when women were not typically welcomed into the business community. As she had done at 29, now 50 and a single parent of seven children, she fought through difficult odds and uncertain economic times to become a very well respected businesswoman. In the early 1990’s Irene sold her business and retired. She enjoyed an active life of family, friends and travel until her health declined, though she never lost her spirit and remained a remarkable and generous woman who contributed positively to her community at Sedgewood Commons in Falmouth, ME. A Memorial Mass of Christian Burial honoring Irene’s life will be celebrated SATURDAY, January 3rd 11:00AM at Sacred Heart Church. Committal prayers to follow at St. Peter’s Cemetery. Memorial donations in Irene's name may be made to Sisters of St. Joesph 100 Pleasant St., Waterville, ME 04901

Family and friends are invited to gather Friday January 2nd from 2-4 & 7-9PM at the PINETTE DILLINGHAM & LYNCH FUNERAL HOME 305 Alfred Plourde Parkway, Lewiston, 784-4023

Comments



“ Paul, Julie, Louise, Chuck, and Ann, My condolences on the loss of your dear mother. Though I had not seen her for nearly thirty years, she has remained a constant influence in my life choices. I trust that all of you will continue to feel her presence and guidance.

Parker Bartley - January 05, 2015 at 09:39 AM



“ Dear Levesque Family, What a very strong and wonderful woman Mrs. Levesque was. She is one of my all time best bosses, always fair, always beautiful. My Dad had a million Sim's stories and I have many myself. Many wonderful memories and many friends were made at Sim's. May she rest in peace and may she live on in all of you! God Bless Her and Keep her in his care! Peace, Deb and Elaine Heroux (and Big Jim too!)

Deb Heroux - January 03, 2015 at 08:46 AM



“ Dear Julie & Deb: Your mother was a beautiful person, and we are glad we got to meet her and, Julie, that she gave us you. One of our fondest memories ever is of the weekend we all spent in Provincetown many years ago. We still laugh at the awesome memories. May those and all your precious memories comfort you and give you strength. With love, Barry, Kathy, Wendy & Ben

Barry & Kathy Goldstein and family - January 02, 2015 at 09:44 AM



“ To Irene's Family: My parents, Burt and Jean Corkum, were dear friends of Irene's and my son and I got to know Irene from going often to Sim's Restaurant when we lived in Maine. Many family celebrations took place there. And always Irene was there with a smile and a great laugh and so very gracious. She was a very inspirational woman who leaves a wonderful legacy to her family. She is in your hearts. God bless you all. Jane Corkum

Jane Corkum - December 31, 2014 at 03:37 PM



“ Our heartfelt sympathy to all the Levesque children on the loss of their dear Mother, Irene.. She was truly a very dedicated Mother and a great friend and human being.. Deepest Sympathy with Much Love, Jean and Burt Corkum Palm Coast, Fl.



“ Julie and Louise, I am so sorry to hear of your mother's passing. While I didn't know your mother, by virtue of knowing you both, just a little, she must have been amazing. My thoughts are with you and your families.

Rachel Dubois - December 28, 2014 at 08:47 PM



“ Julie and Deb and family, So sorry to hear of the passing of your Mom Julie. I met her a few times but have loved hearing how she moved so gracefully into her older years and how much she loved and was loved by all of you...and I will always remember the lobster bisque dinner after that long ride in the VW van to Maine. Love and hugs to you both and your family. P,W, and G.

Peg, Wayne and Gavin Birmingham McClelland - December 28, 2014 at 08:00 PM



“ Dear Louise and family, My deepest condolences for the passing of your mother. Fond memories of her at the restaurant. Wishing you peace during this very difficult time. Sarah E Dillingham-Waterman

Sarah E Dillingham-Waterman - December 28, 2014 at 06:25 PM



“ To Our dear Julie and her family- we are so sorry for your loss. We hope that your fond memories and the love and support of family and friends give you peace and comfort.

Fran and Mark - December 28, 2014 at 11:11 AM



“ Dearest Julie - We think of your Mom & instantly picture her dancing with hundreds in Ptown during your Art exhibition! What an incredible spirit that illuminated when you were in her presence. She expressed her creative energies in her cooking, painting and everything she touched, that clearly passed down to her children. Looking at her face & her radiant smile confirms that you are truly your Mother's daughter.

Sooz & Jan - December 28, 2014 at 10:04 AM



“ My condolences for ur loss. She was a beautiful soul. It was my honor and privilege to care for her on the weekends at sedgewood. May God bless her. She will get lots of chocolate in heaven.

deena brady - December 27, 2014 at 10:17 AM



“ Louise,Chuck and Anne, fond memories of our time together at Sim's. You mother was always an inspiration to me. She was a strong amazing women I will always hold dear to my heart. Peace be with you and all your family.May the many memories you have get you through this difficult time...Jill

Jill Jordan - December 27, 2014 at 09:43 AM



“ To your family and dear friends my condolences, from my heart Tammy Ray

Tammy Ray - December 27, 2014 at 06:46 AM