

# Gayla Lindsley Rivard - Obituary

1920 - 2015

The extraordinary life of Mrs. Gayla Rivard came to a gentle close on March 2, 2015 at the age of 94. She was surrounded by her loving family.

She was born in St. Johnsbury, Vt. on July 2, 1920, daughter of George and Muriel (Abbott) Lindsley. She was predeceased by a brother, Donald Lindsley, and five sisters: Dora, Lillian, Muriel, Mary-Frances, and Elizabeth. Her husband Norman T. Rivard, Sr. passed away on June 21, 1979.

She was a smart, independent, strong woman who called the shots in her family right up until the end. She worked hard her whole life to create a home in the mountains of Vermont where her descendants will gather for decades to come. She provided a place where children are away from electronics and free to take risks. Her legacy is a family of four generations who all know each other well and love each other because she created a special place for them to spend time together (and made it very clear that attendance on certain dates was mandatory).

Gayla was not only born and raised in Vermont, she lived her life as an example of all that Vermont represents and takes great pride in being. She loved strong coffee and strong backs. She was fiercely independent both physically and in her opinions. She believed in offering a helping hand to the weakest among us, but had no tolerance for weakness in herself or weak excuses from others. She believed there was a proper and perfect way to do things. She valued function over form, and appreciated aesthetics only when found in nature. Waste was a sin she rarely committed. Faith was something you lived quietly. Building a legacy for generations of family to come was a duty. She had an open mind, an open heart, and the generosity of an open purse. She was a friend to those in need. She traveled around the world, but there was never a doubt that she was "Made in Vermont".

She loved to learn and was always studying, memorizing, analyzing, and discussing the things she observed and read. A life-long Democrat, liberal politics were a passion. She closely followed local and national politics and campaigned for progressive causes well into her 90s.

She was ahead of her time, running a business full-time while raising four children, but she never ignored or devalued homemaking. She ironed everything, cooked Sunday dinners, baked perfect ginger snap cookies, and made batches of raspberry jam for her family every fall.

She was a hospice volunteer and supporter of the homeless. She cared for and deeply loved her family: daughters Mary-Frances MacDonald of Avon, Connecticut, Claudia Caswell of Milton, New Hampshire; sons, Norman T. 'Bud' Rivard Jr. and wife, Pamela, of Chelmsford, Massachusetts, and Thomas Rivard; six grandchildren: Mary's two children Scott MacDonald and Jessica MacDonald Milam, Claudia's two children Benjamin Magowan and Kelli Magowan Cicirelli, and Bud's two children Kathryn Rivard Colburn and David Rivard; thirteen beloved great-grandchildren; and two great-great-grandchildren, all of whom adored her. Gayla was proud of the five generations she led.

She loved a good party, especially when family could gather on the Hill. So, at her direction, her family is planning a private celebration of her life, to be held in the summer. Friends and family of Gayla will be contacted with details.

Memorial contributions could be directed to:

Homeless Center for Strafford County

PO BOX 7306

Rochester, NH 03839