



Joyce S. Nickerson, age 91, passed away peacefully Monday evening, July 20, 2015 at Sacred Heart Nursing Home. She was the widow of Dr. H. Leonard Simmons, Jr., who passed away in 1958. She was the widow of Mr. Howard W. Nickerson to whom she had been married for 43 years, prior to his death in 2010. She was the daughter of the late Reverend John Henry Sargent and the late Violet Vial Sargent, both of St. Johnsbury Vermont. She was the mother of the late Barbara Sue Simmons. She is survived by her daughter, Jill R. Simmons and son-in-law George G. "Skip" Gray, Jr.; a grandson, Andrew Tagg of California; and several nieces and nephews.

She was the sister of the Reverend Robert Harvey Sargent of Danville, Vermont.

She was born in Greenfield, Massachusetts while her father was the minister of a church there. She grew up in St. Johnsbury, Vermont when he took a church there. She was a graduate of Saint Johnsbury Academy and continued to support the academy endeavors during her lifetime. She moved to the Boston area and went to school there. She worked as an X-ray technician for Boston Hospitals and met Dr. Simmons there. He had enlisted in the Army Air Corps and they lived for a time in California, where he had been assigned. They ultimately moved back to New Bedford and he opened his medical practice there. After being widowed, she worked at the Unitarian Church in New Bedford for several years, where she was also a congregant. She ultimately obtained the position of administrative assistant to the New Bedford Postmaster Antone Silva, where she worked for 10 years. While married to Mr. Nickerson she assisted him in his various positions with the New Bedford Seafood Dealers Association, the New England Fisheries Steering Committee, Nickerson Associates, and the Off-shore

Mariners Association.

She was a quiet person who had a few, very close friends whom she loved very much, including her best friend from the Academy, who lives in North Carolina, Mrs. Ruthmary Spence. They had not seen each other in over 60 years but they still talked on the phone every week. As a young woman she loved to play golf. Her favorite pastime, however, was the police scanner. She was an avid follower and supporter of the New Bedford Police Department and the radio was never off during her daughter's entire career with the department.

In 2010 she survived a sinking of her automobile at the city marina on Pope's Island due to the heroic actions of Dr. John Conley, of Barrington, RI, which gave her five more years of life. He received the Carnegie Life Saving medal for his efforts. Our family will always be grateful for that extra time with her. We will also be forever grateful to the wonderful, caring people at Sacred Heart Nursing Home who took care of her and Mr. Nickerson near the end of their lives. They were truly a blessing.

Her family will receive guests on Thursday, July 23rd from 8 - 9 AM followed by her Funeral Service at 9 AM in the Saunders-Dwyer Home for Funerals, 495 Park st., New Bedford. Burial will follow in Maple Grove Cemetery, Westport. Visiting hours are omitted. In lieu of flowers, remembrances may be made in her name to Sacred Heart Nursing Home Activities.