

Ruth L. Crane - Obituary



Ruth Crane, lifelong resident of St. Johnsbury, passed away Tuesday, May 10, 2016.

Ruth was born in St. Johnsbury on Sept. 13, 1925, the daughter of Thaddeus A. and Marguerite (Lee) Cormier. She graduated from St. Johnsbury Academy in 1943. During her early years, she was a close friend of Marjorie Crane, and through Marge met her older brother Ed. When Ed joined the Army Air Corps early in the War, Ruth started writing letters to Ed, eventually writing every day. When he returned home after nearly four years overseas, she and Ed became engaged. They were married for a few months short of 70 years, living for 68 of those years on the farm they bought at the time they married.

For their first 20 years together, Ruth, by her own description, was "a stay-at-home mom" and "farmer's wife." She raised their five sons, cooking for many years on a wood cook stove, washing diapers in a ringer washer with water heated on the stove, cleaning dishes without a dishwasher, mending clothes, packing lunches for school – all the while

helping Ed with the family business raising chickens. Even in her mid-80s, she would frequently recall that when the boys were young she “made three pies, two cakes and a batch of cookies every week.”

When Ruth’s youngest son entered junior high school, she joined the staff of the Fairbanks Museum in St. Johnsbury. Over a period of roughly 25 years, she served as the museum’s Registrar and as the early-morning weather announcer on the local radio station. She retired from the museum in her early 70s, but for several years thereafter maintained a display of fresh wildflowers at a table near the entrance to the museum during the warm weather months. She and a group she organized gathered flowers each week in the St. Johnsbury area. The flower table display is now named for her. In addition, for several years in retirement, she wrote a weekly column about birds for the Caledonian-Record. Ruth received several awards for her efforts, including the Franklin Fairbanks award, given each year by the Fairbanks Museum to an individual “for lifelong creative and dedicated service to the residents of Vermont, one whose body of work has significantly enriched regional or national awareness and understanding of our cultural heritage or the natural world.”

She is survived by Edward, her husband of 70 years; by her five sons, Richard Crane and wife Janet of Wayne, Maine; John Crane and his husband David Chambers of West Hartford, Vermont; Lawrence Crane and his wife Sherri of San Diego, California; Stanley Crane and wife Barbara of St. Johnsbury; and Leslie Crane and wife Suzanne of Williston. She is also survived by 11 grandchildren and many great-grandchildren;

A funeral Mass will be celebrated this Friday, May 13, at noon at St. John the Evangelist Church, Winter Street, St. Johnsbury. Burial will follow at the McIndoe Falls Cemetery.

Family will receive friends at the Sayles Funeral Home Thursday evening from 6 to 8 p.m.

Memorial contributions could be directed to either The Fairbanks Museum, 1302 Main Street, St. Johnsbury, Vermont 05819 or to The St. Johnsbury History and Heritage Center, 421 Summer Street, St. Johnsbury, Vermont 05819.