

Patricia J. 'Pat' Bonansinga



Patricia J. " Pat" Bonansinga, of Quincy died Saturday, December 2, 2006 at 7:00 am in Columbia Health Care Center, Wyocena, WI.

She was born September 10, 1921 in Quincy, IL the daughter of Bryson and Margaret Smith Blackburn. On April 27, 1968 she married Joe Bonansinga in Rockford, IL. He preceded her in death April 4, 2003.

When Pat was about 8 years old, she had her first plane ride on a Ford tri-motor airplane, and she never forgot the experience. In 1937 when Pat was in high school she had the opportunity to hear the pilot Amelia Earhart speak, and it made a lasting impression on her especially since Amelia Earhart disappeared later that year in her round-the-world flight.

Pat was a 1939 graduate of Quincy High School and attended the University of Iowa. During World War II, she enlisted in the Women's Air Service Patrol (WASP) where she was trained as an Air Force service pilot. Five women from Provo, Utah took lessons and applied to WASP, and 1,850 women were accepted for training at Avenger Field in Sweetwater, TX. The purpose of the program was to free male pilots for combat duty. Training took six months, and upon graduation, she received various assignments including ferrying airplanes from factory to base,

towing targets for gunnery practice, testing new or repaired aircraft, and basic and advance flight instruction. In 1944 the WASP program was deactivated much to the disappointment of Pat.

After the war, Pat lived in Alaska and worked for the FAA before moving to Seattle to become a Pan-American Airlines stewardess. She was later based in San Francisco where she would make numerous international flights as a stewardess. In the early 1960's, Pat moved to Madison, WI and worked for the Stemp Typewriter Company. Upon the death of her father in 1962, she moved back to Quincy and began working for WGEM Radio and TV as an executive secretary.

Pat was a member of St. John's Episcopal Church where she was a former member of the Altar Guild. Pat's hobbies included playing tennis and golf. She was preceded in death by her father Bryson, her mother Margaret in 1986. She is survived by her sister Katherine (John) Caldwell, Columbus, WI and numerous nieces and nephews and grand nieces and grand nephews.

Private burial services will be in held in Calvary Cemetery, and a memorial service will be held in January 2007. Memorials made St. John's Episcopal Church or Sunset Home in Pat's name would be appreciated.

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