

Marian Eddy Houghton died peacefully in her home in Santa Cruz, CA on 25 July 2017 at the age of 84 surrounded by several generations of her family: her children, grandchildren, and husband of 53 years, Edward Houghton. Born in Marysville CA in 1932, she took great joy in nurturing her children and grandchildren and in recounting stories of her pioneer ancestors in New England and California. She considered her roles as mother and grandmother as most important and meaningful in her life.

Marian's artistic talent was widely recognized by friends and family at an early age. Executing an oil painting in five minutes on stage, she became Miss Sacramento of 1950 and participated in the Miss California Pageant in Santa Cruz. She didn't like to sell her work. Her son David, age 11, cried when a Venetian collector was about to buy her portrait of David. She earned a university degree in art and spent two years at the Academia di Belle Arti (Venice) in advanced study with painter Emilio Vedova and a summer in Ravenna studying Byzantine mosaic techniques. She won first prize in a regional competition in northern Italy in 1978 and had one-person shows in commercial galleries in Padua and Venice with the support of Prof. Camillo Semenzato (Art History, Univ. of Padua) and Prof. Vittore Branca (Italian Literature, Univ. of Padua and Director of the Cini Foundation, Venice).

Marian was born during the Great Depression and remembers being hungry before her father, Owen Eddy, a "hard rock gold miner," was able to purchase land, dig a well, build a house, and plant a large garden in Auburn, CA. He was uneasy working in the deep mines and never wanted to be buried under ground; he wasn't. He especially liked his work as "head powder man" dynamiting the routes of highways across the Sierras, such as the Feather River Highway and US 40, later replaced by I-80 on the way to Donner Pass and Lake Tahoe. During World War II he became a master machinist in the Boeing Company.

As a child Marian happily listened to the stories passed down by her grandmothers. Later and over many years she collected additional information and carefully documented the family history, including the early arrivals from England on the ships *Mayflower* (Cooke, 1620) and *Handmaid* (Gurney, 1630). Her maternal great grandfather, Benjamin Barnabus Gurney, younger son of sea Captain Barnabus H. Gurney and Mercy Gurney (née Hathaway), was the first schoolteacher in Marysville. Carrying his books across the Isthmus of Panama, he came to California by ship in 1854 from Marion, Massachusetts. He and his wife Harriet Euretta Gurney (née Androus) owned a stage coach inn in Loma Rica where author Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain) was a friend and frequent patron on his trips to the gold diggings. Marian's grandmother, Nancy Ethel Gurney (née McKinney), was also a schoolteacher, and Marian's mother, Marjorie Eddy (née Gurney), was the only woman optometrist in her graduating class of 200 at the University of Southern California in 1948. Marian's paternal great grandfather, Tom Williams, traveled by horseback from Michigan at age 16 and eventually settled in Round Valley on the Owens River, just north of Bishop, in 1866. He made his fortune as a farmer and rancher, supplying provisions for hungry gold-rush miners. Before long he owned most of the land in Round Valley. His granddaughter, realtor Edith Eddy Ward, followed his vision and is credited with the founding of Palm Desert and Indian Wells.

**In Santa Cruz Marian served for many years as a Eucharistic Minister at Holy Cross Church and Dominican Hospital. She designed the baptismal font at the entrance of Holy Cross. She also worked tirelessly for several years to strengthen ecumenical connections among religious congregations in northern California. She was preceded in death by her son David, his wife Dorothy (DeDe) Houghton (née Anderson), and their sons Luke and Ryan. All died in a small plane crash in July 2011. Marian is survived by her husband Edward Houghton, her daughter Cathryn Houghton Renoe, son-in-law Curtis Renoe, their children Claire and Arthur, and her son John Houghton, his wife Jodi Houghton (née Weidler), and their daughter Kaleigh.**

**A Funeral Mass led by her former pastor Father Mike Marini will be celebrated at Holy Cross on Wednesday, 2 August 2017 at 4 pm, followed by an informal reception in the parish hall. Instead of flowers, friends may honor Marian's memory by donations in her name to their preferred charity.**