



Mary Ravlin Gould

December 26, 1927 - August 21, 2020

Gould, Mary Ravlin 92, residing at Episcopal Church Homes in St. Paul, passed away peacefully on August 21st. A Christmas child, she was born in Minneapolis on December 26, 1927. She grew up in Prospect Park along the River Road, and attended Sidney Pratt Elementary (the "Witch's Hat" water tower on Tower Hill is featured in some of her artworks); she graduated from Marshall High School and Smith College. A person of profound literary, artistic and musical talent, Mary was an avid reader with a searching heart. But most of all, she was a benevolent tornado of non-stop service and creative devotion - who transmitted her love of art, her imaginative gaiety and gusto for life to several generations of her family, as well as to hundreds of Twin Cities children (at St. Paul's Episcopal on Lake of the Isles, and later at St. Stephen's Church in Edina, with whom she volunteered for 30 years at Grant Nursery School in North Minneapolis). There is an old cassette tape somewhere of Mary reading aloud the Christmas story The Polar Express for her grandchildren, ringing a tiny silver bell now and then. And some of her offspring's earliest memories involve her improvised tales of "Frisbee", the little leprechaun fellow who underwent various wild adventures in the neighborhood. She had a special intuitive grasp of childhood, which informed her exemplary artistic accomplishments in painting, drawing and pottery - evoking the lyricism of home life, neighborhood scenes, her father's grain elevators, and the green North Woods. Her pottery is in the vernacular tradition of useful ware, but glazed with vivid and sometimes hilarious designs.

She played both piano and flute; she also kept voluminous journals, diaries, and reflections on her reading. All this while being the loving wife of her husband John, a distinguished Minneapolis attorney, with whom she formed a very dynamic team - raising five children, and always closely and helpfully engaged with the lives of her grandchildren. Mary was active in civic and community life for many decades. She enjoyed a wide circle of friends through her participation in the Great Books Club, her church book club, the Edina Garden Club, a Spanish language club, and the Smith College Alumni Association; she also volunteered at the Como Japanese Garden in St. Paul. In 2014, she published an illustrated children's book titled Magnus, about a church mouse who dreams of becoming a circus cat-tamer, and whose dream comes true. Mary also loved camping in northern Minnesota. In the 1960s, she and John built a cabin on Lake Vermilion, where family and friends, as well as charity auction winners, spent delightful days. Later in life, Mary and John enjoyed several church tours which were also spiritual pilgrimages, twice to Israel and the Middle East, and also to Wales, Cornwall and Ireland. One of her last artworks is a pale watercolor in two parallel versions, looking out a bedroom window into a Welsh churchyard with a tall Celtic cross. The image is quiet, spring-like, both wistful and hopeful. There was certainly something Celtic in Mary's ever-sparkling blue eyes, her sweet and soaring imagination, and her compassionate heart. No doubt she is dancing and singing even now, with her "little people" friends, in that ever-living Land of Faery. Mary is predeceased by her parents, John H. Ravlin and Mary Negus Ravlin; her brother, James N. Ravlin; and two sisters, Ruth Ravlin Susag and Martha Ravlin. She is survived by her daughter Cara Holmberg (David); four sons, Henry (Sarah); James (Barbara); William (Grizelle); and Michael (Noralva); ten grandchildren, Alexander, Amanda (Joseph), Ben (Holmberg), Iñigo, Joseph, Julia, Molli, Monica, Nina O'Keefe (Will), and Phoebe (Khaled); and three great-grandchildren, Sophie, Olivia and Liam. A private interment service will take place at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Edina. Memorials in Mary's name may be sent to : The St. Stephen's Fund, c/o St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 4439

West 50th St., Edina, MN 55424.

Cemetery Details

Hillside Crematory

2610 19th Ave NE
Minneapolis, MN 55418