

## In Memoriam: Doris Paradis Hayden '30

**She had an ear for languages, a talent for needlework and knew the secret to a long life.**

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Born on a farm in Somersworth, NH, Doris Hayden was bilingual from early childhood thanks to her family's French and Quebecois heritage. It was the beginning of a lifelong love of languages and an interest in other cultures.

At UNH, a class taught by a dynamic professor sparked her interest in studying [German](#). After earning both a BA and an MA, Doris took great joy in teaching German and French — as well as elementary Spanish, which she had taught herself. In a eulogy delivered at Doris's funeral, her daughter Joyce DeVoe remembered her mother saying that teaching was so much fun she "felt guilty with every paycheck she received."

Sadly, that changed while Doris was working on her PhD in Romansch, one of four official languages of Switzerland. She was diagnosed with a tumor on a vocal cord. Surgery left her unable to

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speak above a whisper and ended her pursuit of a PhD, plans to live and study abroad and the teaching career she so loved.

Other difficult times followed. After moving to Boston to work for Liberty Mutual Life Insurance Company, Doris met and married Bill Hayden and gave birth to a daughter, Nancy, whom they lost two-and-a-half years later to leukemia. Ongoing throat surgeries often left her debilitated, and Bill himself died before their children were fully grown. But Doris soldiered on, and her three children, Janice Locke, Joyce and Thomas, enjoyed simple pleasures like picnics at Franklin Park Zoo and, after Hayden learned to drive at age 40, visits to beaches and amusement parks.

Nothing was ever wasted.

“When I was a child my parents had two enormous vegetable gardens,” recalls Janice. Her mother canned the excess produce, made jam and “put food by” for the winter. Her daughters say her pies were legendary.



Known for her fine needlework, Doris sewed her daughters' dresses, often with matching outfits for their dolls. She also made special dolls for her children and, later, her grandchildren, firing the dolls' bisque heads in a kiln and dressing each in an outfit that reflected the child's interest. She sewed quilts for family members and donated others for charity raffles.

When her children were grown, Doris returned to Somersworth “like a salmon coming home to spawn,” she joked. As she grew older, both her health and her voice improved. She cared for her widowed mother and helped found the Somersworth Historical Society, where a room is named in her honor. For many years she

was class agent for her UNH graduating class.

An interest in genealogy resulted in a trip to Italy with Janice when Doris was 83. There would be no guidebooks for her. Instead she signed up for Italian classes at UNH so she could converse with everyone she met. In a letter sent to the family after her death, her professor remembered Hayden as a brilliant student who charmed her decades-younger classmates with colorful handmade boxes of homemade cookies.

Janice recalls that, throughout her long life, her frugal mother found a use for just about anything. “If I told her I had replaced something in my house, she would ask what I had done with the replaced item. If I told her I had thrown it out, she would say, ‘I could have done something with that.’” At her funeral the minister noted, “Doris, I think you truly could have made a silk purse out of a sow’s ear.”

In recent years, Hayden was often asked the secret of her longevity. Her answer was simple: “I like being alive.” Life was a pleasure she enjoyed to its fullest until her death on October 29, 2015, at age 106.

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