

## In Memoriam: Beverly Swain Powell Woodward '39

**A devoted wife and mother, she was the former first lady of New Hampshire**

Tuesday, November 28, 2017



A true daughter of New Hampshire, Beverly Swain Powell Woodward was born in East Concord, attended Concord High School and graduated with honors from UNH. With the election of her first husband, Wesley Powell, as New Hampshire's governor from 1959-1963,

she became first lady of the state.

Beverly met Wesley Powell '38H in Washington D.C. while working for former N.H. Governor and U.S. senator Styles Bridges. They married in 1942. When Wesley enlisted in the Army Air Corps, Beverly followed him to training sites around the country, returning to Concord late in her first pregnancy when his orders took him to England.

After the war, the Powells lived in Washington for two years before moving back to New Hampshire, where they purchased a

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home in Hampton Falls. Beverly threw her full support and considerable energy behind her husband as he built his law practice and ventured into politics.

According to their son Peter, both of his parents wanted to stay in New Hampshire, but an unsuccessful run for the U.S. Senate in 1949 tempted Wesley to return to Washington, where his law degree might offer better employment opportunities. Beverly saved the day by presenting him with \$2,000 she had tucked away in small but steady savings over the years. The money enabled them to stay in New Hampshire where their term as governor and first lady began 10 years later.

Wesley Powell's four years in office were sometimes marked by controversy, but Peter remembers his mother being respected by everyone, regardless of their political persuasion. Always by her husband's side, "She was his important workmate and constant support, tireless and devoted," he says.

"She believed each new day brought a challenge to do the best she could with it, and she did so."

An English major at UNH, Beverly was a member of Alpha Xi Delta Sorority and vice president of her class. Following graduation she wrote the class of 1939 alumni column for UNH Magazine and its predecessors for more than 70 years. She served on the board of the Alumni Association from 1956–1960 and as alumni trustee on the board of the University System from 1987-1991. UNH awarded her the Meritorious Service Award in 1954. "She loved the university for what it did for her and does for New Hampshire," says Peter.

A tireless volunteer, Beverly served as a Cub Scout den mother when her children were young, worked on local committees and helped establish the Hampton Falls Historical Society. She was a

longtime member of the local Grange.

Family meant everything to her. In addition to raising two sons, Peter and Samuel, and a daughter, Nancy Brighton, Beverly cared for both her mother and her mother-in-law in their final days.

Throughout their 38 years of marriage, she helped Wesley endure chronic pain from a serious war injury and the final illness that took his life in 1981. In 1986 she married Lt. Col. Douglas R.

Woodward, Ret. '34, welcoming his sons Rev. Thomas D.

Woodward and Robert H. Woodward into her family and caring for Doug before his death in 2007.

Beverly's sight began to fail in the years before her death on June 3, 2017, at age 98. When Peter consulted a file marked "obituary notes" that his mother had compiled to help him when the time came, he found a special message she had left. In large print it read, "She believed each new day brought a challenge to do the best she could with it, and she did so."

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