



## Norma Deins

January 26, 1905 - April 23, 2007

Norma Lucinda Deins, 102, of St. Augustine died on Monday, April 23, 2007. Norma was born in Covington, Kentucky. She is survived by her daughter and son-in-law, Jo Anne Engelbert and Eugene Schepers, with whom she lived for the past twenty-two years; their children, Frank Engelbert, Lee Schepers and Karen Dinelli; Karen's husband Anthony and their children, Anthony Jr., Steven, and Nicole JoAnna Dinelli; and her sister Albertha Sanders.

Norma was a gifted musician and played the violin from the age of 10 until the age of 101, performing with amateur string quartets and chamber ensembles for more than sixty years. She played a Vivaldi trio at her 100th birthday party and a Mozart trio at her 101st, with "My Old Kentucky Home" for an encore. At the age of 85 she taught herself to play the viola and came to enjoy it as much as the violin. Her homes in Long Island and later in New Jersey were always centers for musical gatherings.

Norma's family moved from Kentucky to Florida in 1911 and lived on a houseboat in the Keys, where her father kept bees on various islands. Although no one could swim and all eventually contracted malaria, requiring everyone to return to Kentucky, the family considered their Florida experience the adventure of a lifetime.

Norma was a skilled needle artist and enjoyed quilting, knitting, crocheting, and every type of embroidery. In 2003 she was invited to give a one-person show of her art needlework at St. Augustine's Oldest House Museum.

When she reached the age of 100 in 2005, Norma was interviewed for a local TV show, along with Max Jaffe, then 102, by television personality Norma Sherry -- a thoroughly enjoyable experience for all concerned.

Norma was a member of the United Presbyterian Church and attended the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of St. Augustine since moving here in 1999. She will be remembered for her sunny disposition, her wit and humor and for the indomitable spirit that made her strive to learn to walk again after fracturing her leg in several places at the age of 99 (she was elected Queen of Moultrie Creek Nursing Home, dispensing queenly waves worthy of Helen Mirren). After breaking her pelvis at 101, she learned to walk yet again, becoming the champ of the rehab gym at Bay View Nursing Home. Whether explaining why she decided to omit the word "obey" from her wedding vows ,or how to

appear demure while hunting with your husband and still demonstrate you are a better shot than he, or the secret of a happy marriage (do as you wish but keep your mouth shut about it), she represented a new ideal of womanhood we shall cherish in memory.

Norma will be buried with her husband George Francis Deins in Farmingdale, Long Island. A memorial service will be held in May.

# Comments

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“ Greetings to JoAnne,  
I wanted to mention what a wonderful time I had playing the oboe at Norma Deins 100th birthday party. You and your mother had wonderful events filled with great music. I appreciate the opportunity to play music with you both. I am sending my prayers and thoughts to you during your journey of grief. Take care, M.E. Hanson

**M.E. Hanson** - April 28, 2007 at 04:06 PM

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“ The angels must be rejoicing now that Norma has joined the celestial symphony in universal love. A new star is born in the heavens!

**Mili Koger & Jerry Gamache** - April 27, 2007 at 01:11 PM

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“ She was an amazing person and it was our privilege to have known her.

**Anne & Bill Wilke** - April 27, 2007 at 09:20 AM

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“ Norma lives on in our hearts and thoughts. We remember her inspirational presence, warmth, comforting smile, sharp wit and her thirst for life ... her legacy to all of us.

**Shirley and Ralph De Pasquale** - April 26, 2007 at 08:38 PM

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“ Not long after we relocated to St. Augustine almost 4 years ago, we learned of Norma's amazing life, longevity, musicality, and resilience. We were so fortunate to have met Norma at a holiday musical gathering held by Jo Anne Engelbert and Eugene Scheppers at their home in Commodores Club where Norma also resided. As Commodores Club neighbors we send our deepest sympathy but also our resounding applause for a woman who never lost her vitality or her fighting spirit.

**Horace and Gail Rockwood** - April 25, 2007 at 12:30 PM