



Kathryn Vinokur

1929-2016

Kathy Vinokur passed away at her home on September 12, 2016, at the age of 87. She was the heart of our dance community and will be greatly missed. Marcel and Kathy worked together to build a family, a neighborhood, and a vibrant dance community. If Marcel, with his mathematical approach to teaching folkdance, and meticulous attention to recording historical folkdance detail, was the scientist, then Kathy, his match and life partner, was the captain.

Born Kathryn Bowes Clark on March 3, 1929 in Pasadena, California., she had one brother, Egbert Bailey Clark III. Her family moved to Santa Rosa where her father was an Episcopalian minister. They later moved to Redwood City where Kathy attended Sequoia High School. She graduated as the top female student in her class. The top male student was Gordon Moore, of Moore's Law fame, who co-founded Intel. Although Kathy was accepted at Stanford University, she was very proud to have attended Pomona College, where she graduated, a proud Sagehen, in 1950 with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology. Kathy was invited to become a member of the prestigious Phi Beta Kappa Society due to her academic excellence. After graduation Kathy went on to attend graduate school at USC where she completed her teaching credential.

Kathy married and moved to Palo Alto. She taught elementary school in San Carlos, but stopped teaching when she had two sons, Christopher and Robert. As her sons grew up Kathy was very active in her community. She was a two-time president of the American Association of University Women (AAUW), was the Volunteer Coordinator for the Palo Alto Cultural Arts Center, and worked with Welcome Wagon, welcoming newcomers to the community. She continued to be active with the Phi Beta Kappa Society, attending their annual conferences.

Kathy became involved in Palo Alto politics. During the campaign against the proposed Oregon Expressway, that would remove residential homes and split the city, she met another activist by the name of Marcel Vinokur. The rest is

history. Kathy and Marcel later married and had a third son, David. Kathy and Marcel loved classical music. They attended and ushered many local concerts, especially Stanford Live-ly Arts and The Redwood Symphony. Kathy played the piano, and she and Marcel both played recorders. Kathy came to share Marcel's love of baseball and joined him in supporting the Oakland A's.

Their passion for live theater was strong, with years of season tickets at ACT in San Francisco, and decades of West End shows in London until 2014. Kathy and Marcel loved their annual Shakespeare pilgrimages to Ashland, Oregon with Christopher and his family. Kathy and Marcel both loved hiking the Peninsula hills and almost every summer traveled to Europe to meet good friends for challenging hut-to-hut hikes through the Alps.

Kathy and Marcel worked together to develop a folkdance community. In 1965 Marcel and Kathy initiated the annual Yosemite Mother's Day Dance Camp. It continues to this day and has become a family tradition for many. In the 1970's Kathy and Marcel began monthly dance campouts in Saratoga that lasted until 1983. Bill Robson generously hosted the group in his beautiful home and Japanese garden, with a hot tub! Kathy spent the month before planning and cooking for this event. All of these activities created a community of dancers and resulted in lifelong friendships, relationships, and some marriages. Kathy loved to dance, but was usually very busy. Marcel knew her favorite dances and would play them to lure her onto the dance floor. Everyone waited for Kathy to lead Zensko Makedonsko, and it was truly romantic to watch Kathy and Marcel dancing a slow couple dance.

Marcel taught many classes and held monthly parties over the years and Kathy designed all the flyers. For many years she sat at the entry table to welcome everyone. She decided to hold potluck dinners prior to each monthly party, so that people could meet and mingle. She baked for each potluck and party and coordinated food and drinks so that there was always plenty of food and punch for all. She became famous for her poppyseed cake. Gary Anderson once said that Kathy was the "sparkplug" that made Marcel's parties so enjoyable. She did all this despite the fact that she was quite shy. Marcel and Kathy's New Year's Eve parties were an annual tradition that drew people back from around the world.

Kathy eventually returned to teaching elementary and middle school in San Carlos and later enrolled in weekend and summer classes to earn her Special Education credential. Kathy was a beloved teacher in both general education and special education. She was a lifelong learner and was always taking professional courses to better teach and reach her students. She wrote and received a grant to teach folkdance to students, all aligned with the curriculum. If this was not enough, over the years she served as a teachers' union representative, a mentor teacher, a district liaison to charter schools, and she was the county representative to the state Mathematics Council. Kathy retired from teaching in 2008 after 34 years.

Kathy was very proud of her sons and their accomplishments. She enjoyed their wives and thought they were "amazing"- her words. She loved being the grandmother of eight and in the past year she became a great grandmother as well. Kathy enjoyed having her son Robert and his family living nearby. After Marcel's passing, Kathy was grateful that her son David and his wife Venessa, and their children, moved back from London to live with her the past year.

A common thread throughout Kathy's life was one of service. She was always creating community in her neighborhood, school or classroom. She always had an open heart, and she and Marcel opened their arms or home whenever needed. A few days before she passed Kathy received a friendly call

from Maarten Ultee, who had lived with them forty years prior. Kathy kept her connections over time with everyone. Whether here or far away-you became part of her family.

If there is a heaven Kathy and Marcel are busy organizing dance classes, making improvements, and dancing together with that ever-present twinkle in their eyes for each other.



Thank you both for all that you gave to us. We will continue your legacy and keep our community dancing, eating and taking care of each other.

By Denise Weiss, in collaboration with Pat Kinney and the Sloan and Vinokur families.

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