

MEMORIAM

MILDRED H. RIBA

It is with sadness I report the passing of Milli Riba on October 21, 2004, at age 92. Services were held at Faith Lutheran Church in Pioneer, California. Milli's beloved daughter Marilyn was ceremoniously presented a United States flag in honor of Milli's service to her country as a U. S. Army nurse.

Many of our lives have been touched and enriched by knowing Milli...you can't speak about Milli, however, without saying Elmer. They were a package. My friendship with Elmer and Milli goes back 45 years when they showed up for a beginners folk dance class in Sacramento at the Clunie Club House. They commuted from Vacaville every Thursday, bringing three single ladies with them. Walt and Cleo Baldwin were the instructors for this large class of enthusiastic dancers and I, as an experienced dancer, was instrumental in forming the Pairs and Spares Folk Dance Club. Elmer and Milli were charter members and both served effectively in various offices of that club. In 1967, Elmer was installed as President of the Sacramento Folk Dance Council. With his excellent leadership abilities Elmer was recruited in 1970 for President of the California Folk Dance Federation for a two-year term. Milli, with her social graces, was right by his side as first lady. For several years, they were King and Queen in charge, along with Max Horn, of an annual fancy dress ball which was held in various locations.

The years passed and Elmer retired from the U. S. Air Force. They personally built a beautiful home in Pine Grove and Jim and I were honored to help place the cornerstone. This home became a landmark in the area for the Indian tepee in the yard which was a backdrop for their annual Thanksgiving dinner with an open invitation to one and all.

As you can see, their lives did not slow down in the mountain country as they became active in their Lutheran church where Milli was a talented organist. They taught folk dance classes and all folk dancers were annually invited to Jackson for a folk dance weekend sleepover and Millie served breakfast on her bone china. One memorable theme for this event was the "Waltz Tango Cotillion." Can you imagine? Nothing but tangos and waltzes, our favorites. I loved it!!! Another activity to occupy the Riba's time was their keen interest in Native American culture. They served as docents at Chaw'Se Indian Grinding Rock State Historical Park from the time of the park's dedication in 1967. At Amador Whitney Historical Museum they served as interpretive guides making visitors feel welcome while sharing their knowledge.

Elmer's passing on October 27, 2000, was sudden and unexpected. He has been sorely missed in many walks of life. Milli was admiring their important keepsakes and so she called me and asked if Elmer's Federation Past President's pin could be passed down to Greg Mitchell, the next outgoing Federation president. As Installing Officer I asked Greg if he would mind having a recycled pin and he said he would be honored and proud to wear it in Elmer's memory. So, I took the pin to our jewelry manufacturer in Berkeley where the engraver was astounded to again see this pin of such outstanding quality. They are now made with a different technique. So, thanks to Milli, Greg is now wearing Elmer's pin with Greg's name and years added. A picture of Milli giving me the pin

appeared in Let's Dance Magazine.

Milli recalled that one of her favorite accomplishments was when Elmer was stationed at Hickam Air Force Base in Hawaii. Milli was hostess of a television program and with her gracious manner and winning smile increased the cooking show's popularity from 300 to 2,000 on her mailing list.

God picks the loveliest flowers for his garden and ladies like Milli are rare nowadays. I'm sure Millie is waltzing with Elmer in heaven and when the sun breaks through the clouds they are smiling down on us.

*Fondly submitted by
IRENE OXFORD*