

WENONAH

Historical Society Newsletter



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Her Life was Rich by Example

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The oldest of the six Ramsay children was 10 years old when their father left home. But Jane Tucker Ramsay, their mother, never wavered in her awesome responsibility as a single parent.

"She was a strong woman who was very protective of her children," says David Ramsay, oldest of the six. "She always showed us a positive attitude. Things could be bad for her but she'd still come up smiling, get through the days and weeks, and have dinner for us. We went through a lot of powdered milk and goulash.

I remember Christmases with \$5-\$10 budgets per kid. We always had hand-me-down clothes. She had a specific definition of what she'd accept and what she wouldn't. She didn't want charity from people who felt sorry for her, but she'd accept from good neighbors, and she was always helping others as well. She would absolutely refuse public assistance of any form. She wouldn't take Food Stamps. She wouldn't take unemployment."

Jane Ramsey died June 27. She is survived by her six adoring children: David, Tucker, Jimmy, Ed, and the twins, Jane and Louise. Four graduated from college. Five of the six are in business for themselves, and successful, a classic case of them mirroring their mother's powerful independence.

"We grew up with a very strong work ethic," David Ramsay says. "She taught us that and she demonstrated it. "She graduated from the University of Pennsylvania and she



worked 53 years as a dental hygienist. Her independence traveled through us. We were one adult and six kids who stood our ground. As a family, we were very cohesive and balanced and backed each other up. We fought among ourselves like cats and dogs but we always stuck together as a family.

"It was a very good environment to be raised in. She didn't play favorites. She focused on our strengths and encouraged us to do whatever was good for us—as long as we had good grammar and used good English. She taught us to be independent, believe in ourselves, and beat the odds.

"Her kids were her life. After our father left, she shut down her social life. In the days after he left a single woman didn't get invited out so she decided early to stay out of the fray.

"Her legacy was that she accepted people for who and what they are. One of my brothers said that since her death we realize who she was as an individual. Hundreds have come forward to tell us how she gave them, and others, encouragement. She loved people and loved to be around them. Mother wasn't invited out much, and she hated to miss a party."

Jane lived in a big, sprawling house, and was a resident for all but one year of her life.

She gave back to the town what she felt the town gave to her. She belonged to the Wenonah Reading Club, the Wenonah Woman's Club, the Wenonah Historical Society, and served as Sunday school treasurer of All Saints Episcopal Church. A free spirit, she also was a member of the Wenonah Rifle and Gun Club as a young woman.

A graduate of the University of Pennsylvania's School of Dentistry, she worked for four dentists, including Dr. Don Furey in her hometown of Wenonah, and during her career worked with and educated children, migrant farm workers, and underprivileged children and adults in the Camden Free Dental Clinic. She was a uniquely talented woman whose many interests ranged from pottery making to jewelry smithing to watercoloring to antiques and carving.

Besides her children, her work and her hobbies, Jane Ramsay also had a healthy love for the uniqueness of Wenonah. No one loved the day-long Fourth of July celebration in Wenonah more than Jane. She passed away a week before the 2002 parade and festivities. Jane would have loved to be there, seeing old friends, remembering the good times, and perhaps the tough times as well.

"But I think she wanted to check out before the Fourth," son David says. "Mother never wanted to do anything halfway."

President's Letter

This had been a difficult year for many of us and we have experienced many losses. It is with a very heavy heart that I report the passing of a DEAR friend to the Historical Society, the town, and to me. Jane Tucker Ramsay passed away in June. She leaves a legacy of friends and family. She inspired us all to follow her lead and dedicate ourselves to preserving the wonderful history of this town. Jane raised her family in this town and LOVED every bit of this town. She loved life and taught many of us how to savor each day.

Her love of the Historical Society was unquestioned. She brought new life to this organization under her terms as President and Vice President. She will TRULY be missed.

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