



Irene Atkinson

June 15, 1929 - June 30, 2022

Irene (nee Mercer) Atkinson, 93, of Springfield, Pennsylvania, died on June 30, 2022. Irene was the wife of James F. Atkinson.

Born in Preston, Lancashire, England, she was preceded in death by her parents, Robert and Margaret Mercer, and her first husband, Raymond T. Clifton. Irene finished school at Deepdale Secondary Modern in 1947, and then took a degree through night classes at the Harris College, graduating in the early 1950s.

Professionally, Irene capably attended to a number of positions during her working years; first, being an apprentice to an accounting firm while working toward her degree. Soon after, Irene found employment with a concern helping to fit foundational garments for women following reconstructive surgeries. Irene worked for a time with Tupperware soon after the plasticware reached the United Kingdom. Irene eventually found employment with Howard Harrop's, Blackburn, a department store, as a sales and collections agent. This was her last employment in England and the firm was sorry to see her go.

In the United States, Irene had a more diverse experience of employment, serving as a school playground monitor and then a live-in nursing assistant. Her American work life culminated with her returning to her field of education

as accountant for The Soroptimist International of the Americas.

Irene spent the prime of her life in the fellowship of Covenant United Methodist Church. There she took an active interest in music ministries and fellowship activities, but her greatest devotion revolved around youth work and ministry to those with needs. For what else had God set us down here than to care for one another?

Earlier, at St. David's Free Church, in Preston, Irene had honed her organizing skills, within the congregation as well as being a Girl Guides Captain. Of course, once Irene was in the United States she transferred her efforts from the Guides organization to Cub Scouting - teaching children within a frame of God and Country as opposed to God and Queen.

She loved to create truly amazing somethings out of precisely nothing. Her creativity was seemingly endless, from music, knitting, and counted cross-stitch to organizing people and events – which Irene did with supreme precision.

A fascinating skill Irene wielded with ease was to compel otherwise serious and responsible people to do very silly things indeed. Business owners, engineers, school district executives, and bank managers would obey when she told them they would dress as Bedouins and perform a sand dance, or would dress in long johns and red-heart-print boxers to walk a parcel string tightrope slackly draped between two A-frame ladders.

Irene was especially sensitive to the needs of immigrants and refugees. She knew what it was to be “a stranger in a strange land,” the challenges and frustrations of making a new life in an unfamiliar place. Irene played an important part in Covenant's Vietnam Refugee Resettlement program following the end of that war.

Irene is survived by her seven children, who have turned out to be bewilderingly different, and responsible and successful adults: Janice Mann (Godfrey Mann), Geoffrey Clifton (Carole DeJure), Jean Hills (Peter Hills), John Clifton (Dana Williams), Raymond Clifton (Jessica Clifton), Julie Sealy (Gerard Sealy), and Russell Atkinson (Barbara Felton). She is also survived by eight grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

Relatives and friends are invited to be received by members of her family on Saturday, July 16, from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM at Covenant United Methodist Church, 212 West Springfield Road (Saxer Avenue and Springfield Road), Springfield, PA 19064. A funeral service will follow at 11:00 AM.

Irene's cremated remains will be taken to England at some later date and scattered, commingled with James' cremated remains, among the daffodils in The Lake District National Park, Cumbria.

The old prayer book claims that those we love and see no more increase in the knowledge and love of God, and go from strength to strength in service to God's heavenly kingdom. That sounds like work still to do. Irene's creativity was without bounds and, for all we know, is yet employed in the ministry of care and welcome, but on another shore and in a greater light.

Memorial gifts remembering Irene may be made to Covenant United Methodist Church (memo: Outreach Ministries), 212 West Springfield Road, Springfield, PA 19064, or to The Life Center, 6310 Market Street, Upper Darby, PA 19082. The ministry of the church is vast and varied, of course. The work of the Life Center is to physically and practically aid the homeless community of eastern Delaware County.

Arrangements by Kovacs/Lombardo Funeral Home, Inc.

Previous Events

Visitation

JUL 16. 10:00 AM (ET)

Covenant United Methodist Church
212 W. Springfield Road
Springfield, PA 19064

Service

JUL 16. 11:00 AM (ET)

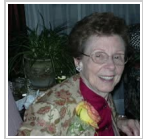
Covenant United Methodist Church
212 W. Springfield Road
Springfield, PA 19064

Tribute Wall



“ *Irene Atkinson*

October 22, 2023 at 05:57 PM



“ *She was a wonderful woman and friend who will always have a special place in my heart. My deepest sympathies to the family.*
Frances Roberts

Frances Roberts - July 24, 2022 at 04:41 PM



“ *Peter and Melissa McLean purchased the Serene Retreat for the family of Irene Atkinson.*



Peter and Melissa McLean - July 11, 2022 at 10:33 AM