

Ella Pfeiffenberger Anschuetz

Alton | Saturday, June 27 2009

Ella Pfeiffenberger Anschuetz, 93, died Saturday, June 27, 2009 in Denver, Colorado.

A longtime Alton resident and widow of former Alton surgeon Dr. Robert R. Anschuetz, she moved to Denver from Alton in 2002 to be near family.

A third generation Altonian, Mrs. Anschuetz grew up on Bluff Street. She was the daughter of Dr. Mather and Hortense Pfeiffenberger, the granddaughter of three-time Alton mayor Lucas Pfeiffenberger, the mother of seven children and the grandmother of six. Her maternal grandfather Rodgers and Uncle Eben Rodgers established the Alton Brick Company. Before her marriage in 1942, Ella attended schools as near as the former Irving and Roosevelt schools in Alton and as far away as the University of Heidelberg in Germany. While in Germany, she attended the 1936 Berlin Olympics and saw Adolph Hitler. She graduated from Monticello Seminary, a high school, and in 1934, she graduated as valedictorian of Monticello College, a junior college. Later she earned an undergraduate degree from Wellesley College, class of 1936, and a master's degree from Washington University.

Many Altonians remember Mrs. Anschuetz as a talented harpist. One of the high points of Mrs. Anschuetz's life was her harp study at Michigan's Interlochen Music Camp. She was the oldest of seven children who played together as a family orchestra and even had a composition adapted for them. In addition to playing with the Alton Civic Orchestra, as an active member of First Presbyterian Church of Alton she played the harp at Christmas Eve services for 50 years. "When she served as an elder at First Presbyterian Church," said her daughter Mary Vogt, "Dad fondly referred to Mom as "Elder Eller."

After his Army service in WWII, Ella brought her husband to Bluff Street to raise their six children. In addition to her extraordinary dedication to her family, she was particularly devoted to excellence in classical music and education, as well as serving the Alton community in several leadership positions. Mrs. Anschuetz's involvement in Alton community service spanned more than half a century. She led the Alton Community Service League as well as numerous Cub Scout, Brownie and Girl Scout troops. She also served on the Jenny D. Hayner Library Foundation Board for 40 years and on the United Way, Monticello Foundation and Alton Museum of History and Art boards. In addition to 21 years in the Irving School PTA, she also enthusiastically attended countless dance recitals, piano recitals, graduations and ballgames. She loved to talk about the night she took her children, Bill and Sara, to the Beatles concert at Busch Stadium.

Her sister-in-law, Marty Pfeiffenberger, will always remember her as a wonderful sister-in-law and a thoughtful aunt to her children. Marty will always be grateful that Ella played the harp for her wedding. "She was so thoughtful; she would wrap individual gifts for my children to take on car trips to be opened along the way." One of the fondest memories for the family was going to Mrs. Pfeiffenberger senior's home for dinner on Sunday evenings.

Mrs. Anschuetz is survived by four daughters; Mary Vogt of San Francisco, CA, Elizabeth Yates of Salem, IL, Jean Lipson of Seattle, WA, and Dr. Sara Anschuetz of Hinsdale, IL, two sons; Dr.

Robert Anschuetz of Shaker Heights, OH, and William Anschuetz of Sao Paulo, Brazil, a sister, Jane Luer of Sarasota, FL, three brothers; Lucas Pfeiffenberger of Alpena, MI, Andrew Pfeiffenberger of Denver, CO, and Franklin Pfeiffenberger of Sarasota, FL, and six grandchildren. She was preceded in death by an infant daughter, Martha Ella, a brother Dr. Mather Pfeiffenberger, and a sister, Mary J. Pfeiffenberger.

A memorial service will be held at a later date at First Presbyterian Church. Interment will be private at Upper Alton Cemetery. Memorials may be made to First Presbyterian Church, 4th and Alby Streets, Alton, IL 62002 or the Alton Museu