



## Eva May McNiece

May 31, 1930 - July 19, 2018

Our Mother and Grandmother was born Eva May Wood on May 31, 1930 to Eva Belle Packard and James Earl Wood in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She was the 5th of 7 children and the last survivor of a beautiful and tight knit family. As a child, Eva May fell in love with books, a passion she indulged all her life, and passed on to her children. Her passion for knowledge kept her curious and thoughtful until her death. Her other passions included family, fashion, bridge, and as a young woman, riding motorcycles - Indians especially!

Like all the children in her depression era family, Eva began working at a very young age. Once she began working in retail, she found her niche and was quickly promoted to manager of the bridal department. Retail suited her lifelong love affair with clothing, fabrics, and jewelry. She always looked fantastic! Years later, when Eva was offered a transfer into the all male staffed menswear department, her sales exceeded that of many men who had been selling on commission for years.

Eva moved to Houston in the mid 50's to attend the University of Houston and start a new career. She met Sidney McNiece on a train trip and they married in 1956 moving to Caracas, Venezuela in 1957. Always independent and confident, she worked hard to become proficient in Spanish and to immerse herself in a new culture. That culture included the eruption of revolution in Venezuela, strong anti-Yankee sentiment, and pregnancy and child birth far

from home and family. For the first few weeks, she popped in to the store and asked, "Tiene cigarillos?" to which the shopkeeper would reply, "Como no." She would say, "Darn it", and walk out. Weeks later, when she learned the meaning of "como no", she laughed at herself, and told that story all that time. Eva's gentle and graceful sense of humor was directed at herself as often as those she loved.

Our family moved often, and with each move - Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio and Texas - Eva enjoyed meeting new people and learning new things. She did not enjoy packing and unpacking, and pondered the timing of Dad's business trips just before and right after each move. In the mid-70's, Eva became active in the feminist movement, joining the Ann Arbor Chapter of the National Organization for Women. She attended the ground-breaking International Women's Year Conference in Houston in 1977. She marched in Washington D.C. in support of the Equal Rights Amendment. She was a strong supporter of the Ann Arbor NOW Domestic Violence Project, the first program for battered women in the State of Michigan, doing everything from providing emergency housing for battered women who had left their abusers, to licking stamps and sealing envelopes for fundraising letters. She adopted the role of morale-booster in-chief, always bringing optimism and a positive approach to the sometimes frustrating work of breaking new ground. Eva also helped the women of Ann Arbor NOW balance hard work with fun, opening her home and her swimming pool for parties and meetings. On one memorable occasion when Eva and a group of other Ann Arbor NOW members were stranded after a conference, Sid sent a limousine to bring them all home in style. Her warm personality, grace and fun-loving spirit are remembered fondly by the life-long friends she made in Ann Arbor. Kathleen Fojtik Stroud, Founder, DVP & SAFE House, 1975 said: "Eva McNiece was the Mother of the Domestic Violence Project and SAFE House in Ann Arbor Michigan during the 1970s. During the beginning years she was our Mother Rock. She provided the background and stability for us to go forth and challenge the conventional wisdom which was

grounded in victim blame. Without Eva's support and the support of her husband and family, we would not have progressed as swiftly.”

Widowed for 23 years, Mom continued to make new friends, joined new bridge groups and served many terms on the board of her HOA. Her passion for her grandchildren, fashion, interesting conversation, crossword puzzles and bridge kept her moving. On her 80th birthday, she decided she wanted to skydive - so she did and she loved it! Her jump out of a perfectly good airplane, and a picture of her in a lime green jumpsuit made the newspaper. A few months later, when she was not allowed to zipline in Alaska, she was not happy.

When Mom died, it was on her own terms in her home, and without fear. While in the hospital, she planned a dinner party for her friends which she enjoyed two days after she returned home. Preceded in death by her husband, Sidney Lanier McNiece, her daughter-in-law, Barbara Chapman and her grandson, Matthew McNiece, Eva is survived by her children, Johnnie Boyer, Sidney McNiece, Jr., Erin McNiece and partner John Gabehart, Raymond McNiece and wife Maureen McNiece, and her grandchildren, Whitney Reeb, Sean McNiece, Rebecca Strimple, Connor McNiece and Alek Strimple. She always let her friends and family know how much she loved them, and how much she appreciated their love. Her love for family and friends will live on in our love for each other. We wish to especially thank Larry Gibson for making sure she got to her bridge games and Carmen Rodriguez for her excellent care. She will be sorely missed at next year's McNiece Family Reunion, which she attended with fervor since 1966.

Eva's burial will be held at Shelter #3 in Ft. Sam Houston National Cemetery, on Friday, August 10th at 9:30 a.m. In lieu of flowers, Eva asked that we all consider a donation to SafeHouse Center, 4100 Clark Rd., Ann Arbor, MI

48105 or our local domestic violence shelter.

# Previous Events

## Graveside Service

AUG **10**. 9:30 AM (CT)

Ft. Sam Houston National Cemetery  
1520 Harry Wurzbach  
San Antonio, TX 78209

# Tribute Wall

ET

“ *What a swell gathering to celebrate Eva May's bright light. Her radiance shows through all her family and friends. We are all better for having known her.*

*My very best to Emily and the family for setting the stage for the great experience.*

*Eva will be missed.... Thank you!*

*Bridge Buddy Eric*

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**Eric Tietze** - August 11, 2018 at 06:17 PM

CP

“ *My condolences to all the family left to mourn this wonderful person . Some might think, This can't be true!' But there are words of comfort found in the Bible to help you. Peter said: “ Blessed be the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for according to his great mercy he gave USA new birth to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.’ So, we have hope to be reunited with our loved ones because of the promise of the resurrection. May these words bring you comfort in this difficult time.*

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**cynthia Puente** - August 04, 2018 at 12:56 PM

MP

“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



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**Mission Park** - August 02, 2018 at 06:44 PM