



## Patricia H. Hartley

September 19, 1923 - January 7, 2021

Patricia Cordelia Hawkins Palmer Hartley (Pat), died peacefully 1-7-2021, at her Blue Skies home in San Antonio. Pat was born in Austin 9-19-1923, to Frances Booth Hawkins and Wallace Eugene Hawkins. She spent her childhood in Dallas, where she attended Ursuline Academy, Hockaday School, and Highland Park High School (1940 graduate). As a student, she excelled at art, and pursued these talents throughout her years. She started higher education at Stevens College (Columbia MO), but returned to Texas to continue at UT Austin, and SMU (Dallas). She focused on archeology, which was a lifelong passion. She excelled in her drama classes, which led to a Hollywood screen test with Gary Cooper. She was offered a contract, but her father persuaded her to finish college first. During her summers, she was a flight attendant for Pan American Airways, and fondly remembered her trips to Cuba, where she would stay long enough to enjoy the nightclub life of music and dancing.

In 1946, she met John Robert Palmer, Jr. (Jack), a dental resident who was attending to the care of her brother, Buddy, hospitalized at Parkland Hospital following a motorcycle accident. Happily, Buddy fully recovered, and the chance meeting of Pat and Jack resulted in marriage vows on February 24, 1947. The newlyweds moved to Brownsville, Texas, where Pat helped Jack set up his dental and oral surgery practice. The Palmer family eventually moved to a country home, where Pat and Jack raised their three daughters on

acreage shared by dogs, cats, horses, cows, pigs, burros, chickens, and turkeys. After Jack died in 1979, Pat eventually moved to San Antonio to be closer to her daughters. Independent and curious about the world, she began travels that took her to China, Russia, Africa, Holland, Australia, and New Zealand. After a few years of international adventures, she was surprised when a former boyfriend, from her early 20s, tracked her down to reintroduce himself. She married Lt. Col. Gregg Hartley in May, 1986. They lived in Coral Gables, Florida for a few years before returning to Texas to make their home in Castroville. Following Gregg's death ten years later, Pat moved into Blue Skies of Texas in San Antonio, where she was an active resident for 25 years, making many friends among the residents and staff.

Pat was known for her red hair, Irish temper, outgoing personality, and a recognizable laugh. She was strongly proud of her Celtic ancestry and her Texas roots. While a homemaker in Brownsville, she was active in many community efforts, including Junior League, First Nighters, Girl Scouts of America, the Democratic Party, Church of the Advent, and Gladys Porter Zoo. A lifelong animal lover and advocate, her work at the zoo was closest to her heart. She was hands-on in her efforts, determined to save any animals that were at risk. After a newborn Geoffroy's Cat was abandoned by its mother, she and husband Jack brought it home, where she encouraged it to nurse on Miss Kitty, a Palmer barn cat that had just given birth. The Geoffroy's Cat grew healthy and was eventually returned to the zoo. On another occasion, she and Jack took their spots in a rotation of zoo personnel who helped socialize Bruno, a gorilla born in 1972, by feeding, nurturing, and caring for the baby primate for short stints in their home.

Baptized a Catholic, Pat returned to that religion after participating in the Episcopal church for many years. She was a member of Daughters of the Republic of Texas, and Chi Omega Sorority.

She was preceded in death by her mother, Frances Booth Hawkins; father, Wallace E. Hawkins; brother, John Michael Hawkins (Mary, deceased); sister, Harriet Andrews (Andy, deceased); husband, Jack Palmer; second husband, Gregg Hartley; and son-in-law, Andy Fredrickson. She is survived by her loving daughters, Franci (Jim) Plunkett; Peggy Fredrickson; Lita (Noeli) Besteiro; and her grandchildren, Jason (Maya) Fredrickson, Nate (Alise) Fredrickson; and great-grandchildren, Nolan and Walt, and Danika; and brother Charles (Buddy) Hawkins.

Her family thanks Blue Skies employees for all the compassion, attention, and excellent medical care Pat received.

Donations can be made to Gladys Porter Zoo, Brownsville Tx., in memory of Pat Palmer Hartley.

Per her wishes, there will be no services.

# Tribute Wall



“ *everytime the phone rings, i think its you mom! say hi to Andy and daddy and Gregg and everyone else!* ”

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**Lita** - January 22, 2021 at 08:19 PM