

WINTERTHUR MOURNS THE DEATH OF RUTH DU PONT LORD

Younger Daughter of Winterthur Founder Henry Francis du Pont and Ruth Wales du Pont Will Be Greatly Missed

WINTERTHUR, DELAWARE—It is with great sadness that Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library announces the death of Ruth Ellen du Pont Lord, the last surviving daughter of Winterthur founder Henry Francis du Pont and Ruth Wales du Pont.

“We are deeply saddened. It is the end of an era for the estate and the institution,” said Winterthur Estate Historian Maggie Lidz.

Born in New York on January 14, 1922, Ruth was the younger of two children born to Henry Francis and Ruth Wales du Pont. Her older sister, Pauline Louise du Pont Harrison, died September 11, 2007.

A resident of New Haven and East Lyme, Connecticut, Ruth grew up in New York City as well as Winterthur, Southampton, and Boca Grande, Florida. She attended Foxcroft School and graduated from Vassar College as valedictorian. She received a master’s degree in education from Yale.

She and her first husband, George de Forest Lord, lived a Yale-centered life in New Haven and raised three children, Pauline, George, and Henry. Their baby daughter Edith died in 1954. In 1964 Ruth and three friends founded the Long Wharf Theatre, to which she remained passionately committed. She and George Lord divorced in 1977.

In 1970 Ruth took a job at Yale New Haven Hospital, co-leading support groups for parents of severely ill children and writing research papers on disparate topics, including a teenage girl’s right to refuse kidney dialysis and the impact on the patient of the death of the psychoanalyst. She later became Research Associate at Yale’s Child Study Center, working on custody issues. In 1994 she collaborated with Albert J. Solnit and Barbara Nordhaus in publishing *When Home is No Haven*.

She spent 16 joyful years with her second husband, John Grier Holmes, a theatre man and one-time head of the Yale Whiffenpoofs. At his urging, she wrote *Henry Francis du Pont and Winterthur – A Daughter’s Portrait*, now in its 4th printing. John Holmes died in 1997. In her mid-80s, Ruth by chance re-met her childhood friend and neighbor, Harold G. Haskell, of Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania, and a marvelous romance blossomed. They were “Partners for Life” until her death. Ruth lived life to its fullest, with an upbeat spirit, hilarious, irreverent sense of humor, deep friendships, and generosity to causes that included social welfare, education, the theatre, and the environment.

Her death creates a terrible void for family, colleagues, and friends including Hal Haskell; Pauline Lord and David Harlow of East Lyme, Connecticut; George de F. and Gail Lord of Athens, Georgia; Henry Lord of New Haven, Connecticut; five grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

A funeral service will be held Saturday, August 16, at 3 p.m., at St. Ann’s Episcopal Church in Old Lyme, Connecticut. A second service will occur Saturday, September 6, at 11 a.m., at Christ Church Christiana Hundred in Greenville, Delaware. Burial will be in the du Pont Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Ruth’s memory to the Long Wharf Theatre, or to the Albert J. Solnit Program at the Yale Child Study Center.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ruth du Pont Lord throws her wedding bouquet from Winterthur’s Montmorenci Staircase in 1947. Image Courtesy of Winterthur.

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Winterthur—known worldwide for its preeminent collection of American decorative arts, naturalistic gardens, and research library for the study of American art and material culture—offers a variety of tours, exhibitions, programs, and activities throughout the year. General admission includes a tour of some of the most notable spaces in the 175-room house as well as access to the Winterthur Garden and Galleries, special exhibitions, a narrated tram tour (weather permitting), the Campbell Collection of Soup Tureens, and the Enchanted Woods children’s garden. \$20 adults; \$18 for students and seniors; \$5 for ages 2–11.

Museum hours

10:00 am- 5:00 pm, Tuesday- Sunday.

Winterthur, located on Route 52, six miles northwest of Wilmington, Delaware, and five miles south of U.S. Route 1, is closed on Mondays (except during Yuletide), Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day.

Winterthur is committed to accessible programming for all. For information, including special services, call 800.448.3883, 302.888.4600, or TTY 302.888.4907, or visit winterthur.org.



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