

VIRGINIA M. "GINNIE" McKOWN



Virginia M. "Ginnie" McKown, age 95, on Sunday, February 18, 2024, of the Baptist Manor, formerly of Whitehall. Wife of the late John C. McKown; mother of Jay (Jo) McKown of Mt. Lebanon, Bob (Joanne) McKown of Whitehall, and Dave (Danette) McKown of Peters Township; grandmother of Mike, Tim (Becky), Scott (Alison), Michelle (Nick), Katie (Mike), Erik (Emily) and Zack (Audra); great-grandmother of:

Teagen, Jovie, Sawyer, Easton, Brooks and Mac.

Ginnie was a graduate of Carrick High School and a 1948 graduate of the University of Michigan Dental Hygiene program at a time when the Michigan program was among the first in the nation to offer a two year program leading to Dental Hygiene licensing. She was the first Dental Hygienist hired into the staff of the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh and her 40-year career was dedicated to introducing dental hygiene as a key component of public and personal health care in Pittsburgh.

Ginnie served as both onscreen cast and background crew for "Happy's Party", a pioneering early television broadcast (circa 1953), for children that promoted good dental hygiene practices using a hand puppet named "Happy". She joined the staff of the newly formed Allegheny County Health Department, supporting its focus on dental health programs, including opening the first public dental clinic for children in 1958. Prior to 1963, Pitt Dental School did not offer a Dental Hygiene program. Ginnie was recruited by the Pitt Dental School to develop and direct the clinical component of its inaugural Dental Hygiene program. In doing so, she defined the clinical curriculum, directed the building of the clinical facility from a training perspective, and served as its primary instructor for several years. She then focused her effort on promoting good dental health practices in a public school setting and was hired by the Mt. Lebanon School District to function as an in-house Dental Hygienist for the district. Well beyond keeping the district compliant with state oral exam and record-keeping mandates, Ginnie actively and creatively taught students in classrooms the importance of good dental hygiene. She ended her career working as a hygienist in private practice dental offices. Ginnie continued with her college studies at night, over the course of 20 years, and received a Bachelor's degree from the University of Pittsburgh.

She was a faithful member of Baldwin Community United Methodist Church in Whitehall, where she and her husband enjoyed singing in the choir and later joined Christ Church in Bethel Park. She enjoyed supporting the Music for Mt. Lebanon program. Ginnie provided leadership for the affiliated Keynotes program as president and as a board member for many years. Keynotes is a philanthropic organization that awards scholarship money to young artists so they can continue their studies and achieve their musical goals. Ginnie and her husband were Pitt football season ticket holders for 40 years. She had an eye for fashion and enjoyed looking well put together using classic, tasteful styles. She did modeling while in high school for Kaufmann's fashion shows and in her later years she modeled senior ladies' fashions. Ginnie was quite active until her last year, driving herself for everyday activities and attending volunteering events and many luncheons from within her large social network.

Friends will be received at the **JOHN F. SLATER FUNERAL HOME, INC.**, 412-881-4100, 4201 Brownsville Road, Brentwood, PA 15227 on Thursday, February 22, 2024, from 1-4 and 6-8 p.m. Funeral Services will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Friday in the funeral home chapel. Please send condolences to www.johnfslater.com.

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