



Dorothy Pearl Sellers

September 18, 1913 - October 6, 2022

Dorothy Pearl Sellers a centenarian of Freeport, Long Island, passed away quietly in her sleep on October 6, 2022. A resident of Freeport since the mid-1940s, Ms. Sellers had recently celebrated her 109th birthday with family and friends.

Ms. Sellers was born September 18, 1913, to Mary Pearl (née Fries) and William George Sellers in Connellsville, Pennsylvania, a thriving coal and coke town in the hills southeast of Pittsburgh. The Sellers family was prominent in town, and Ms. Sellers, along with her elder sister Virginia, enjoyed a privileged and lively childhood that included social events, regular visits to the Carnegie Library, picnics alongside the Youghiogheny River, and walks in the woods, which began her life-long love of nature. While in high school, Ms. Sellers acted in school plays, wrote poetry, and created her own greeting cards, hinting at her artistic endeavors yet to come. As a member of the Girl Reserves she demonstrated an early commitment to civic duty, and her intelligence was celebrated with her induction into the National Honors Society. She graduated from Connellsville High School in the Spring of 1931 and enrolled that Fall as an English major at Ohio Wesleyan University.

Despite her comfortable beginnings, Ms. Sellers' life was profoundly impacted by the Great Depression and family loss. While a junior in high school, the family home that was known as the "show-place of Connellsville" was gutted

by fire and the contents were looted by locals. Ms. Sellers later recalled going to school and seeing classmates wearing her clothing. In 1932, with her father's business failing, Ms. Sellers was forced to drop out of college after just one year, and the following year her father died from heart disease after months of prolonged illness. In the face of such personal tragedy, Ms. Sellers showed remarkable courage, strength, and resilience, all life-long characteristics. With her ever-present positive outlook on life, she set forth to New York City to find employment to support herself as well as help support her mother with assistance from Virginia.

After her arrival in the City and several failed attempts to find a job, Ms. Sellers altered her year of birth and forged a reference letter to finally gain her first job as a secretary. By the time her new boss discovered the forgery, Ms. Sellers had proved herself too essential to be let go. Initially working for businesses that included the L. K. Liggett Drug Company, she rose in rank to become an executive secretary within the liquor industry, much to her mother's chagrin. From 1947, she served as an executive secretary for several vice presidents and presidents of Calvert Distillers Corporation, Frankfort Distilling Company, and ultimately Seagram Company Ltd. Throughout her career, Ms. Sellers continued to demonstrate her indispensability until her retirement in 1981.

When not at work, Ms. Sellers could be found sunning herself at Jones Beach, hosting cocktail parties at her home, attending concerts, and visiting museums, but much of her time was spent crafting in her basement studio. By the 1940s, Ms. Sellers had a thriving side business creating decorative miniatures for Easter and Christmas that she sold under the label "It's a Dotti Sellers Original." The Waldorf Astoria gift shop carried her exquisitely detailed Easter egg dioramas, paper mâché angels, and lighted miniature Christmas trees among other items. One of her trees was sent up to President Herbert Hoover's apartment in the Waldorf Astoria, and another was gifted to

President Dwight D. Eisenhower at the White House. Ms. Sellers was approached by several business dealers hoping she might undertake bulk orders, and amongst her correspondence are letters declining the offers since she truly loved and was dedicated to her career with Seagram. In the 1980s, following her retirement, Ms. Sellers began a new artistic enterprise painting floral designs on t-shirts, sweatshirts, canvas totes, and pottery containers, taking inspiration from her own garden and the natural world around her. In old age, even when her fingers could no longer create miniatures, each Christmas she dutifully made and wrapped her signature chocolate-peanut butter balls for her family and friends.

A resident of Long Island since the mid-1930s, and of Freeport since the mid-1940s, Ms. Sellers loved her town, the community, and its proximity to New York City. Writing to a family member shortly after moving to Freeport from Stewart Manor, she declared it was a great place for shopping and thought she would really like it there. Ms. Sellers continued to take her civic duty seriously and maintained an active social life right up until her final days. Born before women had the right to vote, she never missed an opportunity to cast her ballot. In 2016 she even switched parties to vote for Hilary Clinton, and she received a personal thank you note from Clinton in return. Ms. Sellers was a supporter of Friends of Freeport, the Freeport Historical Society, and Planting Fields Arboretum of Oyster Bay, and a heavy user of the Freeport Memorial Library from the first week she moved to town. Ms. Sellers was also an avid gardener, enjoyed doing the New York Times crossword puzzle, took aerobics at the Freeport Recreation Center into her early 100s, and she loved to entertain. Whether serving up a cup of tea, glass of wine or her famous Bloody Mary in her cozy living room, plant-filled sunroom, or beautifully landscaped yard, Ms. Sellers was an inveterate host and excellent raconteur. She had the distinction of living through two pandemics, the Spanish Flu and COVID, and regaled her guests with stories of her many adventures from the

years in between that included trips to the 1939 World's Fair, dancing at one of the Inaugural Balls held for Franklin D. Roosevelt, attending the Kentucky Derby in 1948 and a fashion show in Paris during the 1960s, and many more.

Preceded in death by her sister Virginia Hornberger, Ms. Sellers leaves behind a multitude of friends within and beyond the Freeport city limits, extended family, and her nearest and dearest family members: niece Patricia L. Harper; nephew Stephan H. Hornberger and his wife Nancy; great nephew Ian L. Harper; great niece Mary Alice Harper; great niece Ch'uyasonqo H. Lane, her husband David, and their two daughters and son; and great nephew Kuisami S. Hornberger, his wife Laura, and their daughter.

A private celebration of Ms. Seller's life will be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations be made in her honor to any of the following: the Freeport Memorial Library (attn. Library Director Lee Ann Moltzen, 144 W. Merrick Rd., Freeport, NY 11520), the Freeport Historical Society & Museum (350 S. Main St., Freeport, NY 11520), Hospice Care Network (99 Sunnyside Blvd., Woodbury, NY 11797, <https://www.hospicecarenetwork.org/tribute/>), and Planting Fields Arboretum (Planting Fields Foundation, Development Department, PO Box 660, Oyster Bay, NY 11771, <https://plantingfields.app.neoncrm.com/forms/annualfund>). When making a contribution, please be sure to state the donation is in Ms. Sellers' memory and include your contact information

Tribute Wall



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Mary Alice Harper - October 18, 2022 at 09:37 AM

RB

“ Dorothy was a life long friend of my mother. Back in the 1950s my mother took me to NY & we visited Dorothy where she worked, I believe as secretary to the Chairman at Four Roses or Seagrams. I just remember that the office was sumptuous. She was friends with my mother when I was born in 1939. I also remember that she made miniature Christmas tree under glass that she sold to the department stores. A very creative woman.

Rollin Berger - October 10, 2022 at 04:29 PM

PM

Her hand made Christmas creations are amazing! I especially loved the choir boys that were arranged under a miniature Christmas tree. Each one had its own original painstakingly painted face and hair. Their little mouths open in song! Gold Angels lined the fireplace and red glittered eggs each with their own scene inside strung from the chandelier. Magical! She's going to give those Angels on heaven a run for their wings! God Bless her! It was special knowing her.

Patricia Moran - October 20, 2022 at 08:51 PM