



Phyllis Elaine Cima

SEP 28, 2023



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P hyllis E. Cima

April 14, 1928 – September 28, 2023

Resident of Menlo Park

Phyllis Cima, known by her friends and family as a bastion of taste, beauty and elegance during her life, passed away peacefully from complications of Alzheimer’s disease at the age of 95. A consummate host, Phyllis invited family and acquaintances from her extensive world travels, into a home that was curated under her exacting eye.

During her early life on a farm in Murray, Iowa, Phyllis learned all that was required for success there: feeding the chickens, canning fruit, sewing and baking. Her parents, Elnora and Charlie Thurman, had a large extended network of family close by and Phyllis saw the importance of family connections, whether it was at a barn raising or a simple potluck celebration. Starting school she skipped a grade – kindergarten – so was actually a year younger than all of her classmates but excelled. Upon high school graduation she moved to the “big city” of Des Moines to work in the banking industry. She met her love and life partner, Norman, through family and church friends and they married in 1950. Moving to St. Louis where they bought their first house, their daughter Joyce was born, and during a 6-month TDY to Oxnard, CA, their son Alan was born. Loving the weather in California, Phyllis and Norm moved to Orange County and then to the Bay Area where they lived in the same house for over 60 years. She concentrated on raising her family, advancing Norm’s business career, and making the world a more beautiful place.

Discovering a love of travel early in their marriage, Phyllis and Norm saw the world together, allowing her to have a hands-on appreciation for the art of other cultures. With Norm’s business taking him to Japan frequently, Phyllis discovered Ikebana, the ancient Japanese art of flower arranging. Appealing both to her green thumb and precise nature, it was the perfect way to spend



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her time while Norm was working. She served as Ikebana International San Francisco Bay Area chapter president, organized many flower exhibitions at the Hall of Flowers in Golden Gate Park and became an expert teacher to others in the Ikenobo style school. Like a poem or painting made with flowers, Ikenobo expresses both the beauty of flowers and the beauty of longing in our own hearts. Visiting her home one could always find an understated but elegant flower arrangement reflecting the season and the balance of line, color, and form.

Like her favorite hummingbirds, Phyllis was constantly moving, picking up and putting things in their right places, moving quickly, and seemingly 3 feet ahead of everyone else. She was a gracious and generous hostess who prepared elegantly simple meals with the freshest ingredients. Guests were in awe as she did this all in the background of lively mealtime conversation. An expert in noticing the tiniest of details, Phyllis loved nothing more than to find something beautiful as the perfect gift for someone she loved.

Preceded in death by her husband Norman, she is survived by her daughter Joyce Anthony (Tom) of Woodside, son Alan Cima of San Carlos, grandchildren Rebecca Lyon (Adam) of Bothell, WA, Jessica Cima of San Carlos, Tyler Anthony (Ashley) of Denver, Tori Post (Zenon) of San Jose, and great-grandchildren William and Andrew Lyon. She is also survived by her sister Marilyn Fritchen of Campbell, CA and brother Eldon Thurman of Columbus, OH, who's weekly phone calls enhanced her life even when she could no longer speak.

The family is extremely grateful for the long-term care and love she received from the Sage Eldercare Solutions team, and especially her devoted home care providers Art and Silvio. A private memorial service will be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests gifts may be designated to the Norman and Phyllis Cima Fellowship Fund at the Stanford Graduate School of Business.



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Phyllis by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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