



# Geneva Pryor Laurie

MAY 25, 1912 - MAR 16, 2015



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**G**eneva Pryor Laurie, a resident of Clearwater Florida, passed away on March 16th at Wright's healthcare center in Seminole after battling pneumonia for more than a month. She was just a few months shy of her 103rd birthday. A devoted mother, wife, nurse, U-S Army veteran, and in later years world traveler, "Gene" led a full life which began on a farm in Delaware at a time when the news of the sinking of the Titanic still dominated newspaper and magazine coverage.

Geneva was the eighth child of James and Lavina Pryor of Clayton Delaware. A 1931 graduate of Smyrna High School, then known as John Bassett Moore High School, Gene went on to study nursing in Wilmington. "Bedside nursing was one of my great loves," recalled Gene earlier this month, "later they even paid me for teaching it. I got the amazing sum of \$200." In 1933, Gene's oldest brother Clifford served as a member of the 107th Delaware National Assembly. As a Democratic state Assemblyman, Clifford received an invitation to attend Franklin D. Roosevelt's first inauguration. Gene went along. It was one of her most exciting early adventures. "I got out my best gown, determined to go to the Inaugural Ball," Gene remembered wistfully. "In those days, there was only one ball. Nowadays there are many. When we got to the steps; the entrance to the hotel ballroom, it was just so crowded, we just couldn't get in, I just couldn't get in." "Still," Gene concluded, "I got to Washington and we were just happy to see FDR sworn in." Ten year later in July 1943, with World War Two into its second year, President Roosevelt delivered a rallying "fireside chat" on the radio, declaring "we shall not settle for less than total victory." Gene wanted to be in "the service" and enlisted in the Army Nurse Corps. In September 1943 she received the rank of second lieutenant. Gene hoped for an overseas posting, but as the war continued and casualties mounted, she was assigned to the 2,700 bed, Halloran Army Hospital on Staten Island, New York.

There, as the war entered its final year, she met a handsome, 37 year old doctor,



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Captain Andrew L. Laurie M.D., recently back from combat tours in North Africa and the United Kingdom. Gene and Andy Laurie married after the war. She helped set up a medical practice in Florida and then in 1950 moved to Worcester Massachusetts where they raised two sons (Jim and Duncan) and where Andy doctored war veterans at the Veterans Administration Clinic.

In 1980, following Andy's death, Gene moved to Normandy Park in Clearwater Florida where she built a new life – part of it focused on a her passion for global travel. In twenty years, nearly a dozen countries. “My favorite places included Hong Kong and Shanghai.” Gene said as she looked back on her life earlier this month. “I went to some pretty unusual places as well – like the Eagle's Nest in Bavaria where Hitler and his mistress were. Not many of us who had been in the ‘service’ in the war go there.” Turning to more pleasant travels, Gene recalled she “loved London where my grandson Christopher was born. And I travelled by train under the ‘Chunnel’ to Paris. It was so fast. And I didn't even spill my glass of some excellent French champagne!”

A celebration of Geneva Laurie's long and rich life will be held at 11 am March 28th at Matthews-Bryson Funeral Home in Smyrna Delaware with her internment at the Odd Fellows Cemetery.

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