

## Arleen McCarty Hynes      3 May 1916 - 5 September 2006

### News Obituary

**Re:** Sister Arleen McCarty Hynes died Sept 5, 2006 in St Cloud Minnesota; Pioneer of Bibliotherapy at St Elizabeth's Hospital Washington,DC, Widow of Eugene McCarthy's Legislative Ass't Emerson Hynes, mother of 10, Benedictine nun for 25 years

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**Daniel's Funeral Home**, 1010 Second St. N, St Cloud Minnesota , 320-251-0383

Neither Arleen McCarty Hynes, OSB nor her identical twin Eileen were expected to survive when their dying mother prematurely gave birth to them on May 3, 1916. However, by the end of her fourscore years and ten, Arleen had raised a family of ten, played a critical role in pioneering the field of biblio-poetry therapy, and recently celebrated 25 years as a member of St Benedict's Monastery, St. Joseph, Minnesota. Like her twin, Arleen lived every day of a long life to the hilt --a little vague about names, dates and the operation of mechanical things but brimming with passion for people, especially those with whom she shared her life, for art and poetry, for ideas, for justice and humanity, and for a rich, reflective spiritual life.

While their seven older siblings were raised by their father, the twins were adopted and raised by their 55 year old aunt, Josie Dunn McCarty, their beloved "Mamma." They grew up reading voraciously, praying, and dancing the nights away to Big Band tunes in Sheldon, Iowa.

After graduating from library school at the College of St Catherine's, Minnesota, Arleen married Emerson Hynes on June 26, 1941. Together they built a house they called *Kilfenora* in the woods in Collegeville Minnesota, down the road from St. John's University, where Emerson taught philosophy and sociology. They were best friends and partners, sharing reflections and ice cream nightly after the children were in bed and living according to principles of the causes they championed, including the Catholic Rural Life Movement, the Liturgical Movement and the Christian Family Movement. Among other things, Arleen served a term as National Family Life Chair for the Council of Catholic Women. While she was a remarkable mother, she had made a pact with her dear friend Monica Erler to use their telephone chat time to talk about ideas, not about children.

Arleen and Emerson raised their own vegetables, a cow, chickens, eight sons and two daughters. The family lived by the Benedictine mottos *Ora et Labora* (Work and Pray) and *Let All Guests be Received as Christ..* Arleen lettered *Work is Love Made Visible* on the walls (though her children teased her that due to dyslexia she had spelled *Visible* when the correct word was *Miserable*) and orchestrated an elaborate job chart; every day ended with the family reading the Psalms from the short Breviary. A steady stream of visitors came to talk and laugh at *Kilfenora*, including relatives, monks and others associated with St John's, and regular gatherings of "The Movement", a collection of leftist Catholic artists, writers, and thinkers, including Dorothy Day, J. F. and Betty Powers, Don and Mary Humphrey, and Joe and Jodie O'Connell.

In January, 1959 the family left Collegeville for Arlington, Virginia when Emerson agreed to serve as Legislative Assistant to his former classmate, Eugene McCarthy, who was elected to the US Senate that year. Arleen, like her brood had to

adjust from being country mice to suburbanites (a transition that never fully took). However she stayed intellectually and spiritually active; she worked with a study group on Vatican II, served on the National Council of the Aging. As Virginia President of AAUW (American Association of University Women), she did a pioneering study of the Role of Women, in the early 1962.

When McCarthy ran for President in opposition to the Vietnam War, Arleen served as head of the Volunteers for McCarthy. However the stresses of the campaign contributed to Emerson's suffering a stroke and, in July, 1971, a fatal heart attack, eleven months after their seventh child, Michael, died in a drowning accident.

At 55, Arleen had to go to work to support herself and the three youngest boys. She was hired as Patient's Librarian at St Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, D.C., the only federal mental hospital. In that position she became interested in poetry therapy; with Dr Ken Gorelick, she began conducting bibliotherapy groups and then developed a training program and was a prime force in establishing what is now a leading creative arts therapy professional organization, the National Association of Poetry Therapy (NAPT).

She worked hard to make sure that this field adhered to professional standards. With her daughter Mary she wrote what is still recognized as the "bible" for this field: *Biblio-Poetry Therapy: The Interactive Process*. In 1978, she was awarded the Dorothea Dix award, in recognition of her contributions to enriching the lives of patients at St. Elizabeth and in 2002 was recognized by NAPT

Ten years after the death of her beloved Emerson, Arleen strongly felt the need to be part of a spiritual community; she retired from St Elizabeth's and joined the Sisters of St. Benedict, St Joseph Minnesota, just miles from St. John's and Collegeville, where the family had started. She took her final vows in July, 1981. Arleen remained active in the field of biblio-poetry therapy, working with women's shelters, and continuing as a board member for NAPT.

When she was diagnosed with liver cancer in late 2004, she declined to seek treatment; instead she lived out her "bonus days" with the same good cheer, insatiable curiosity, strong political opinions, love of others and of God that characterized her life. She is survived by the members of her Benedictine Community, 9 children (Denis (Susanna), Patrick (Mary), Mary (Gordon Berry), Hilary (Kathy Daley-Hynes), Brigid, Peter, TMore (Mary), Timothy, and Christopher (Olivia Primanis) ) as well as a lively abundance of grandchildren, a joyful tumult of great-grandchildren and innumerable relatives and friends. Having been granted her life long wish for a happy death, she joins in eternity Emerson, Michael, Eileen and many dear relations by blood and law.

While Sister Arleen will be buried at St. Benedict's Monastery in Minnesota; a memorial service will be scheduled in the Washington area this fall. The family asks that in lieu of flowers, donations be made in her name to The Monastery of St Benedict, 104 Chapel Lane, St. Joseph, MN 56374-0220.

**A**lways, I think her children would agree, our mother

**R**ejoiced and found some way to be glad in the day the

**L**ord had made—as she learned at her Mamma’s knee—  
**E**ven from deepest sorrow understanding can grow;  
**E**ven the greatest joy may hold complex ambiguity;  
**N**othing in this wide world should be wonder-free.

**M**any might also, on reflection, agree how like a  
**C**razy quilt is the life our mother stitched together —  
**C**utting from the fabric of love and loss that came to hand  
**A**n array of patches, random sizes and shapes--those  
**R**oles she played—sister, wife, mother, Sister in Christ;  
**T**hose life-long passions: poetry, prayer and family –  
**Y**et how they fit together— beautifully unexpectedly.

**H**ow hard it is, those who love her do agree, to  
**Y**ield our mother into the arms of eternity-yet  
**N**ow do we so, rejoicing to know she will be  
**E**mbraced there by those most dear, by  
**S**uch a heavenly host, praising the Lord eternally.

MH-B March 30, 2006