



## Mary Virginia Zeller

May 16, 1927 - August 8, 2024

Mary Virginia Zeller, passed away peacefully on August 8, 2024 at her home in Napa, where she lived her entire life. She was 97 years old. Mary was born on May 16, 1927, the middle child of Hugo and Virginia Zeller.

Mary loved sports all of her life. She enjoyed playing baseball with the boys in the empty lot next to the family home on Third Street. Her love for baseball was evidenced throughout her life, as she often took her nephews and nieces to Oakland A's games. A good time was had by all. She also loved hanging out with her aunt, Barbara Gibb Ryken and the two of them spent many hours experiencing adventures with her brother, Bob and cousin, Gene Soares. As she grew up, she enjoyed watching football and basketball and played golf and swam at Napa Valley Country Club. She attended Shearer Grammar School, Napa intermediate School and then Napa High School. During the recent Covid years she would share that her high school years were dominated by World War II, one of the reasons she only had one yearbook for her entire high school career. Always a good student, Mary headed to University of California, Berkeley where she majored in Italian. She graduated as a member of Phi Beta Kappa, a scholastic distinction she was proud of.

Following college, Mary went into business with Bill and Barbara Ryken and started a fine china gift store named Ryken & Zeller Gifts. She performed bookkeeping duties for the store, leaving the sales portion to Bill and Barbara.

It soon became apparent that this retail experience was not her passion. In the late 1950's she left the partnership and headed off to San Francisco Normal School to obtain a teaching credential. Mary then came back to Napa to teach grammar school, primarily 4th grade at Pueblo Vista Elementary. She was often remembered fondly after retirement by her many students. Mary retired after 25 years of teaching in 1982. She then began to work part-time helping with the bookkeeping at Zeller's Hardware store, owned by her brother, Jack who she was very close to. She eventually retired from there to begin selflessly looking after her mother, Virginia, and handling all the bookkeeping for the family real estate interests.

Mary lived at her parents' home on Third Street until her death and we are so grateful to her niece, Carin Zeller, who had an important hand in helping her remain in the family home. Mary was cared for by a wonderful team of caregivers from Your Home Nursing Services (now Apex) for 17 years. We are grateful to her many caregivers over the years and particularly Christy, Tammy, Daisy and scheduler, Deborah and nurse, Lisa, as Mary neared the end of her life.

Mary is preceded in death by her parents, Hugo and Virginia Zeller, her nephew, Greg Zeller, her niece, Debra Zeller Terry and her best friend and aunt, Barbara Ryken. She is survived by her brothers, Bob Zeller and Jack Zeller, 7 nieces and nephews, 18 great-nieces and nephews and 10 great-great nieces and nephews.

Mary had a quiet, unassuming presence and a wry sense of humor that was especially appreciated in the birthday cards she sent to her family members. She was loved by her caregivers for her uncomplaining spirit and by her family for her never-ending interest in what her nieces, nephews and their children were up to. She was a person well-versed in many subjects. Until her passing, she remained an avid television Jeopardy viewer, who rarely missed stating

the correct answers ahead of the contestants! We will miss her peaceful presence, her smile and insightful conversations.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be sent to the Salvation Army at [Napa.SalvationArmy.org](http://Napa.SalvationArmy.org) or a charity of your choice.

The Celebration of Life service for Mary will be held at 11:00 AM on Thursday, August 29, 2024 at Tulocay Cemetery and Funeral Home, with lunch and a slide show to follow, in the Tulocay reception area.

# Cemetery Details

## Tulocay Cemetery

411 Coombsville Rd  
Napa, CA 94558

# Previous Events

## Celebration of Life

AUG **29**. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (PT)

Tulocay Cemetery  
411 Coombsville Rd  
Napa, CA 94558