



Francis March Hatch

August 10, 2014

Francis March Hatch died peacefully Sunday, August 10, 2014 from old age at the Kindred Assisted Living Laurel Lake in Lee. He was 95 years old. In the truest sense of the word, he was a most gracious gentleman who well represented the virtues of the Greatest Generation. He lived a wonderful life. He was born in Washington, D.C. on Oct. 1, 1918, but raised on the family homestead on the slope of Haleakala on the island of Maui, Hawaii, the son of Alexander Gilchrist and Dorothy Aleshire Hatch. His grandfather, after whom he was named, was appointed by President Franklin Roosevelt, to be Vice President of the provisional government of Hawaii and Foreign Minister of the Republic of Hawaii who negotiated with the United States of America the agreement to make Hawaii a Territory of the USA in 1898. In 1925, the family moved to Farmington, Conn. and then a few years later to Rutland, Vt. where he grew up with a taste for mischief and adventure. Frank graduated from Philips Exeter Academy in Exeter, N.H. where he excelled as an outstanding athlete. He then attended Dartmouth College prior to enlisting into the Army in 1941. He married our mother before he deployed and served as a Captain in the European Theatre with the 87th Infantry Division with responsibilities that included action in the Battle of the Bulge and liberating Nazi Concentration Camps. He received the Bronze Star for bravery while serving in the European theater. He never spoke of his war time experiences until very late in life and would never see a World War II movie. He remained in the Army as an officer in the Reserve Corps until 1953. Vowing never to marry "that Joanne Fitzpatrick woman," he weakened one day on a park bench in Rutland, Vt. Seeing Joanne come out of the Post Office, he offered to walk her home. On the way home, they sat in the park to talk. Joanne said she just mailed her boyfriend her acceptance of his marriage proposal even though she didn't really want to marry him. "Then why did you accept?" Frank asked. Joanne replied, "I just want to get married." "Then marry me!" Frank blurted out. Our Dad told everyone that this decision was the best decision he ever made. They had a wonderful marriage for 56 years which resulted in three loving children, Debbie, Bill, and Jack. In 1950 Dad and the family returned to Farmington, Conn. where he initially worked in insurance and real estate before landing a job with the Farmington Savings Bank where he would remain for 30 years and from which he would retire as Executive Vice President. He was active in the community

through the Exchange Club, the Farmington Library, and a longtime member of the Farmington Congregational Church. He enjoyed playing bridge, especially Tournament Bridge with our Mother and together they were a formidable pair. After retiring, Mom and Dad traveled the world via any transportation available: plane, ship, barge, car, or camel. "The world is a wonderful place," Dad would say, "but only if you look in all the right places." They spent 25 summers every August in Chilmark, Mass. on Martha's Vineyard where their children and grandchildren continue to visit each August. In addition to their summer getaway on the Vineyard, they had a second home in Friendship, Maine for over 10 years. Dad is survived by his three devoted and successful children: Debbie Wiswesser of Stockbridge, Bill Hatch and his wife, Peggy of Dracut, Mass. and State Senator Jack Hatch and his wife Sonja Roberts Hatch of Des Moines, Iowa. Dad, or "Unc" as he was known to his grandchildren, is also survived by seven grandchildren, Tara Breuer and her husband, Eric of Warrenton, Va., Megan Wiswesser of Ann Arbor, Mich., Ryan Wiswesser and his wife, Emily of Girdwood, Alaska, Sarah Hatch of Charleston, S.C., Alexander Hatch of Nashua, N.H., Carly Hatch of Omaha, Neb., and Caslon Hatch of Anchorage, Alaska, and four step-grandchildren, Regan Simpson, Laura Ogonowski, Caroline Ogonowski, and Mary Ogonowski. In addition, Dad is survived by his sisters Harriett Westin of Wellesley, Mass. and Betsy Paul and her husband Ray of Hampton, N.H. and his five nieces. Dad was predeceased by his beloved wife of 56 years, Joanne, who died December 27, 2000. The family would like to extend their heartfelt thanks to Laurel Lake Extended Care personnel who made his time there so pleasant and encouraged him to be his usual charming self. They were informative and welcoming to all who visited Dad. We also would like to extend our sincere gratitude to HospiceCare in the Berkshires who provided support, personal care, and a willing ear for Dad's many stories during his last six months. Burial will take place at a later time at the convenience of the entire family. Those planning an expression of sympathy are asked to consider a donation to HospiceCare in the Berkshires, Inc., 877 South Street, Suite 1 West, Pittsfield, MA 01201.