



## Dinnie R. Irish

February 20, 1929 - July 28, 2022

In the wee dark hours of July 28, 2022, the shining light named Dinnie Rae Irish escaped Earthly bonds to rejoin her Maker. At 93, her body could no longer serve her lively spirit; she was at peace and ready, even eager, for her journey Home. She lived a long, happy life and countless people loved her, so hers was not a sad or lonely departure.

Virginia Rae Otterbein Irish, a lifelong Michigander, was born in Charlevoix on February 20, 1929, where her father was superintendent of schools. Her only sibling,

Margie, couldn't pronounce her name, and thus "Dinnie" was born. After moving to Sault

Ste. Marie briefly, the family eventually settled on a small farm in Vestaburg, where

Dinnie learned to judge cows and harness draft horses. Her mother was her teacher in

a one-room schoolhouse. Dinnie left the farm to pursue a degree in Home Economics at

Central Michigan University. There she met her lifemate, a vocal music student named

Frank Irish, who was required to sing “O Holy Night” to Dinnie’s parents in exchange for a blessing on their engagement. He obliged, they married, and soon settled in Rochester, where they raised five children plus an AFS exchange student from the Netherlands who became a true son. After more than three richly fulfilling decades in Rochester, Frank “took his bride back to the country,” to an ancestral farm of her Norwegian relatives in the north woods of the Upper Peninsula, near Quinnesec. They spent the remainder of their happy 61 years together at “the farm,” where Frank died in 2012 in view of Dinnie’s magnificent flower garden. She lived there alone for a few years, then transitioned to assisted living, where she formed many loving bonds with her caregivers. Descended from Norwegian immigrants, Dinnie spent her final months in Norway, Michigan.

Summarizing the noble human being who was Dinnie Rae Irish is a daunting task. The words of the philosopher, Plotinus, come close to describing the aim of her life: “To make our soul good and beautiful is to make ourselves like unto God, for God is beauty.” Embodying beauty came naturally to Dinnie, as her entire life was steeped in it: in the farms, forests, and lakes of Michigan and on camping trips across the nation; in flower gardens and honest hard work; in service to family, church, and community; in

the beauty of language and the arts, especially music, poetry, and story; and in home cooked meals and long friendships. She found beauty everywhere in the world she traveled with Frank, stretching her mind and heart to embrace other cultures and peoples. Mother Teresa's belief that "the problem with our world is that we draw the circle of family too small" did not apply to Dinnie.

The most vital source of beauty for Dinnie was her Christian faith. She lived her faith with quiet integrity and joy. An important aspect of her character, based in Jesus' example of standing with the poor and oppressed, was her fierce commitment to basic fairness and justice. She displayed this in all arenas of her life, from never playing favorites among her six children to her active participation in the Civil Rights movement in the 1960's, including going door-to-door in Pontiac registering black people to vote. Dinnie was adventuresome, curious, and fun; kind, gentle, and humble, though she also had a strong backbone and resolve. She was keenly intelligent, and in conversation, ever alert and attentive. She was a bit Pollyannaish, competitive in board games, and quite particular about her taste in literature. Dinnie wrote thousands of

notes during her lifetime to encourage and celebrate others. She loved the natural world. She cheered for the Detroit Tigers. Even into her late 70's, she played a mean game of tennis.

Dinnie is survived by her sister, Margie Eckert; her six children, Sandy Ehlert (Mark), Wendy, Nancy, Tim (Maricell), and Jeff (Michele) Irish, and Adelbert Hallewas (Mike Hoff); 11 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren; generations of cousins (especially her neighbor-cousin, Roxanne), nieces, and nephews; her PEO sisters; and many friends of all ages.

Dinnie's life will be celebrated at the First Presbyterian Church, 395 Hamilton Ave, Kingsford, at 10am on Saturday, October 15 th . Samples of goodies that came out of her oven will be served immediately following the celebration. Donations in her honor can be made to Bay Cliff Health Camp, P.O. Box 310, Big Bay, MI 49808. On her deathbed, Dinnie Rae Irish extolled the virtue of her Norwegian ancestors for living their faith more than talking about it. It seems fitting to repeat the verse spoken at the funeral of her beloved Uncle Billy: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant!" (Matthew 25:23 ) Well done, Dinnie. You made the world a more beautiful place.

# Previous Events

## Celebration of Life

OCT **15**. 10:00 AM (CT)

First Presbyterian Church  
395 Hamilton Avenue  
Kingsford, MI 49802

# Tribute Wall

PL

“ I met Dinnie and Frank on a trip to Ireland and we became friends and kept in touch over the years. They were wonderful people and I have never forgotten their kindness to me -- my husband had just died.

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**Paula Lifschey** - June 01, 2023 at 02:02 AM

MB

“ Dinnie was a wonderful women! I enjoyed taking care of her in her last days, it was truly a pleasure in the brief moments I had with her on a daily basis. I think of her often! Your all in my prayers!

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**meghan bowerman** - November 22, 2022 at 07:31 PM