



Doris Nettleman Stifel

February 24, 1924 - May 2, 2013

Doris Nettleman Stifel died on May 2, 2013 at Swan Creek Care Center. She was born at Toledo Hospital on February 24, 1924. Doris graduated in 1941 from Scott High School and The University of Toledo in 1945 with magna cum laude degrees from each. Upon graduation, she taught premedical courses at the University. She was a member of Phi Beta Kappa and Phi Kappa Phi, both honorary societies. She was a registered medical and x-ray technician and helped several doctors set up x-ray laboratories in their offices. In 1960, she married Dr. John L. Stifel who had two grown sons by a previous marriage but had lost his wife.

As a nature lover, Doris became interested in Monarch butterflies as no one knew what happened to them during the winter – they just disappeared. Other butterflies stayed in one of their developmental stages. With Doris' help they learned that the Monarch butterflies migrated all the way to Mexico in the fall and their offspring came back in the spring and early summer. Due to her extensive work in this field, Doris became known as the Butterfly lady of Ohio. When she became older and was unable to do the field work, she devoted her time to giving Monarch programs in this part of the country and to teaching people how to tag Monarchs so that more could be learned about their migration. During her lifetime, she also loved to travel visiting all the continents and both poles.

In retirement Doris moved to Swan Creek Retirement Center where she stayed until her death. She is survived by her brother, William E. Nettleman,

M.D., several nieces and nephews and many friends. Besides her parents, Mr. & Mrs. Donald E. Nettleman, Sr., her brother, Donald E. Nettleman, Jr. and John Stifel, M.D. preceded her in death. Services will be at the Coyle Funeral Home, 1770 S. Reynolds Rd., Toledo on Saturday, May 4. The family will receive friends from 1:00-3:00 p.m., with a funeral ceremony to follow. Interment will be private at Woodlawn cemetery. In lieu of flowers, memorials are suggested to The Butterfly House, 11455 Obee Road, Whitehouse, Ohio 43571, or Swan Creek Retirement Village, 5916 Cresthaven Lane, Toledo, Ohio 43614. Please view and sign our online registry at CoyleFuneralHome.com.

Cemetery Details

Woodlawn

1502 W Central Ave
Toledo, OH 43606

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 2. 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM (ET)

Coyle Funeral and Cremation Services
1770 S. Reynolds Road
Toledo, OH 43614
(419) 865-1295
<https://www.coylefuneralhome.com>

Tribute Wall



“ I was saddened to discover recently that we lost Doris a short time ago, as I no longer live in Toledo. Some people come in and out of your life and you are never the same. Doris was one of those people. I worked with Doris as an intern in the chemistry labs at Owens-Illinois through my college career at UT and she taught me much about science, analytical thinking, and technical work. I couldn't wait for my "work days" to go into the lab and spend time learning more wisdom from her. She was an amazing lady and a joy to work with. My fondest memories were when she rounded all the interns up and drug us out to Crane Creek and Kelly's Island to tag Monarchs. I will remember her fondly and am grateful for having known her.

Jeff Henning

Jeff Henning - September 09, 2020 at 01:21 PM

BA

“ Doris attended my Continuing Education fitness class at the University of Toledo for many years. Everyone enjoyed Doris' sense of humor and many stories and information about her life and the butterflies. She often brought the buckets of almost emerging butterflies to class for us to see and often one would be emerging as we watched. She certainly impacted all who met her in the most positive way. I was privileged to have her in class all those years and missed her when she could no longer attend as did the class members. With many fond memories she lives on in our hearts.

Bunny Ashby

Bunny Ashby - May 05, 2013 at 06:25 AM

CB

“ *My sympathies to Doris's family. I enjoyed her friendship. She was funny and such a joy to be around. I have many memories of fun times hot air ballooning and sharing dinners at her home while she taught us the joys of microwave cooking. You are missed Doris.*
Cindy Bonnell

Cindy Bonnell - May 04, 2013 at 11:07 AM

DD

“ *To the family and friends of Doris Stifel:*

I am one of those long-time Monarch taggers from Fred and Norah Urquhart's Insect Migration Studies program. As a close friend of the Urquharts, I often heard about the remarkable work Doris was carrying out in the Maumee Bay area. Finally, in 1997, at the North American Conference on the Monarch Butterfly in Morelia, Mexico, we met.....and we kept in touch from that time. I last spoke with Doris by telephone just before her 89th birthday. Doris's joy and enthusiasm was infectious. Always upbeat in spite of the challenges of aging and the medical conditions she had to deal with. I have lost a good friend.

*Don Davis
Toronto, Ontario, Canada*

*Historic Consultant, Flight of the Butterflies
www.flightofthebutterflies.com*

Don Davis - May 03, 2013 at 06:50 PM

TB

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Toledo Blade - May 03, 2013 at 12:52 PM

TB

“ Blade Article, continued...

She married Dr. John Stifel, a prominent Toledo physician, in September, 1962. After the wedding, the couple stayed in the New York apartment of John D. Biggers, president of the Libbey-Owens-Ford Co. Dr. Stifel died in September, 1965.

She traveled the world and visited both poles. She took up hot-air ballooning in her 70s.

"She was someone who would fit in high society and sleep on the floor of the Amazon in a sleeping bag," her niece said.

Surviving is her brother, Dr. William Nettleman.

Services will be at 3 p.m. Saturday in the Coyle Funeral Home, where the family will receive friends after 1 p.m. The family suggests tributes to the Butterfly House or Swan Creek Retirement Village.

Contact Blade staff writer Mark Zaborney at: mzaborney@theblade.com or 419-724-6182..

Published in Toledo Blade on May 3, 2013

Toledo Blade - May 03, 2013 at 12:41 PM

“ (News article) Toledo's Butterfly Lady, who was recognized internationally as an expert on the migration of monarchs - and who single-handedly tagged tens of thousands - Doris Nettleman Stifel died Thursday in Swan Creek Care Center. She was 89.

She learned in February that she had pancreatic cancer, her niece Dorothy Harper said, but she was ill only in recent weeks.

"She had two really good months. It was mind over matter," her niece said.

Mrs. Stifel, formerly of West Toledo, moved to Swan Creek Retirement Village about five years ago.

Before Duke Wheeler opened the Butterfly House near Whitehouse in 2001 as a showcase and sanctuary, he consulted with Mrs. Stifel. She continued to train staff.

"She had so much enthusiasm and knowledge," Mr. Wheeler said. "She was our guiding light for years."

*Mrs. Stifel was a career scientist who'd aspired to be a physician, but her interest in nature dated from childhood summers spent at her family's Evans Lake cottage in southeast Michigan's Irish Hills. In the 1970s, she read about a Cleveland Museum of Natural History field trip on how to tag *Danaus plexippus* - the monarch butterfly. She bought a membership that day and within weeks was teaching field-trip participants.*

It was only in the early 1970s that researchers from the north confirmed wintering sites in Mexico for the eastern North American monarch. A decade later, monarchs that had been tagged on Kelleys Island were found in central Texas and central Mexico, establishing that monarchs fly a Great Lakes-to-Mexico migratory pattern.

Mrs. Stifel was a dogged tagger of monarchs, roaming the Lake Erie shore with a butterfly net to catch and then affix a numbered bit of paper to a wing. In 1986, she attracted international attention with the recovery in Mexico of two monarchs tagged months earlier, and 1,500 miles away, in an eastern Lucas County clover field. Until then, no other monarch researcher was credited with more than one recovery, even though thousands were tagged every fall. In the next two years, her reputation soared as monarchs she tagged continued to be found elsewhere - in Mexico, but also Indiana and Kentucky. She raised as many as 600 monarchs a summer from eggs, tagged them, and released them.

"The more we know about nature, the more we should know about our way of living," Mrs. Stifel told The Blade in 1996.

She recruited others to her cause, teaching them about the monarch and how to tag. She campaigned against pesticides and the frequent mowing of ditch and roadside vegetation, which she said contributed to a decline in butterfly activity.

She also was a birder and a volunteer bald eagle nest watcher for the Ohio Division of Wildlife. She'd been a board and executive committee member of the Nature Conservancy's Ohio chapter.

"She was an individualist," her niece said. "She was not interested in clothes. She would get her hair cut in a bowl cut. She didn't wear makeup. She was interesting and full of knowledge and wanting to teach and give her enthusiasm to anyone she met."

Mrs. Stifel said in 1995, walking among the milkweed in search of monarch eggs, "I get a kick out of it too. School buses have gone by, and the children stick their head out the window and yell, 'Hey, Butterfly Lady!' "

She was named naturalist of the year in 1995 by the Toledo Naturalists' Association. In 2006, a gazebo to house the monarch project at Maumee Bay State Park was named in her honor.

She was born Feb. 24, 1924, to Dorothy and Donald Nettleman. A 1941 graduate of Scott High School, she received a bachelor of science degree in 1945 from the University of Toledo. After graduation, she was hired as a UT biology instructor. She took graduate courses, but left behind pursuit of a medical career when her mother had a stroke. She later was a research chemist for Owens-Illinois Inc., retiring in 1983 after more than 20 years.

She married Dr. John Stifel, a prominent Toledo physician, in September, 1962. After the wedding, the couple stayed in the New York apartment of John D. Biggers, president of the Libbey-Owens-For

Toledo Blade - May 03, 2013 at 09:31 AM

JA

Our thoughts are with you during your time of sorrow. Our deepest sympathy for your loss.

"Once a Bulldog, always a Bulldog"

Jesup W. Scott High School Alumni Association

Jesup W. Scott High School Alumni - May 05, 2013 at 02:36 PM

JN

“ 1 file added to the album *New Album Name*



Jim Nettleman - May 02, 2013 at 10:59 AM

MS

“ 1 file added to the album *New Album Name*



megan stamos - May 02, 2013 at 09:34 AM