

Mary Etta Gonyea

SARANAC LAKE — Mary Etta Gonyea, 83, of 637 state Route 3, Saranac Lake, died Saturday, Oct. 9, 2004 at the Adirondack Medical Center in Saranac Lake.

Born on April 26, 1921 in Saranac Lake, she was the daughter of Alfred and Cora (LaPiere) Bernard. She married Albert Arthur Gonyea on Feb. 16, 1942 at the Notre Dame Church in Malone.

Mrs. Gonyea was a life-long resident of Saranac Lake and had been employed by the Adirondack Correctional Facility in Ray Brook as a kitchen supervisor for 16 years until her retirement in 1985. She also worked for many years as kitchen supervisor for the town of St. Armand Summer Youth Program.

Mrs. Gonyea served as the St. Armand Town Historian for 49 years, a job which she took over from her father at the time of his death. She was involved

with the Clinton/Franklin/Essex County Library System for 25 years, was a member of the Catholic Daughters of America Court St. Bernard and a charter member of the Saranac Lake Women's Civic Chamber. She was also a member of the Saranac Lake Elks BPOE 1508 for 34 years and a past senior regent of the Saranac Lake Moose Lodge.

Mrs. Gonyea had been a member of the Saranac Lake Veterans of Foreign Wars Ladies Auxiliary for 58 years and had served as their treasurer for 45 years. She also was a past president of the St. Lawrence County VFW Ladies Auxiliary Council and a past fourth district president of the Department of New York State VFW Ladies Auxiliary. She

also served as chairwoman for the VFW Ladies Auxiliary Voice of Democracy for 25 years.

Mrs. Gonyea was awarded the Citizen of the Year award in 1983 and is also a recipient of the Good Neighbor Award. She also received numerous citations, including one from the American Red Cross for her many years as a blood donor. She was also bestowed the honor of serving as Queen of the Saranac Lake Winter Carnival.

She is survived by her husband of more than 60 years, Albert of Saranac Lake; one daughter, Cora Jeannie Walter and her husband Jay of Sackets Harbor; one son, Mario Anthony Gonyea of Cottonwood, Ariz.; three grand-



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children: Michael Walter of Hopkinton, Albert Walter of Colton and Barbara Pishock of Fredricksburg, Va.; and three great-grandsons: Ty Walter of Ohio, Andrew Walter of Colton and Tommie Pishock of Fredericksburg, Va.

Calling hours will take place from 2 to 4 and 7 to 8:30 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 12 at the Fortune-Keough Funeral Home in Saranac Lake. A VFW Ladies Auxiliary service will take place at 8:30 p.m. Tuesday at the funeral home. A funeral service will immediately follow.

Interment will take place in Brookside Cemetery in Bloomingdale at the convenience of the family.

Friends wishing to remember Mary Gonyea may make memorial contributions to the Saranac Lake Volunteer Fire Department Rescue Squad or Clinton/Essex/Franklin Library System in care of the funeral home.

Saranac Lake Area

Chamber of Commerce

518-891-1990
30 Main Street
Saranac Lake, N. Y. 12983

June 4, 1983

1983 Citizen of the Year

Our Citizen of the Year is a native of Saranac Lake, having come into the world at Trudeau Sanitorium. This person graduated with honors from Saranac Lake High School in 1939.

The person we honor tonight became an active member of the American Red Cross in 1943 and remained active in that organization through 1976. That involvement included a tour of duty in Germany from 1945 to 1947 and operation of the local Red Cross Canteen from 1953 through 1976.

For 14 years, our Citizen of the Year has been a Trustee of the Clinton - Essex - Franklin Library System. "Librarys are the key that opens everything for everybody," said our honored guest. Other activities include 15 years as Chairman of the Town of Saint Armand Republican Committee and Past Senior Regent of the Saranac Lake Moose Lodge.

As Saint Armand Town Historian, she wrote a book on the community that was released during the nation's Bicentennial called "Saint Armand '76" which traced the entire history of the township dating back to 1844. Another book - called "Update '76" - is in the making with the release date scheduled for the year 2,000. Our Citizen of the Year has been Town Historian since 1959. She also has been a member for many years of the State Association of Historians, the Upper Hudson Federation of Historians and the Essex County Historical Society.

Our Citizen of the Year describes herself as being "very tied up in youth activities and Americanism." Nowhere better is this in evidence than in the involvement she has put forth in the Auxiliary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The woman we honor tonight became involved with the V.P.W. Auxiliary in 1943. Since that time, her accomplishments

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can only be described as "amazing!"

She served four terms as President of V.F.W. Post 3357 and is preparing to begin her 25th year as Treasurer of that same organization. Our Citizen of the Year is a Past President of both the Saint Lawrence County V.F.W. as well as the Fourth District Department of the State V.F.W. She is past Legislative Chairman and is currently Deputy Chief of Staff for the State V.F.W. Auxiliary.

One of the projects in which she derives great satisfaction is the Voice of Democracy Program. She has served as District Chairman for this V.F.W.-sponsored event for 25 years. It takes in high school students from grades 10 through 12 in Franklin and Saint Lawrence Counties. The woman we honor tonight has spent numerous hours every year organizing and overseeing this event which builds character and strengthens leadership abilities in some of the area's young people.

It is a tribute to the individual we honor this evening that her community involvement spans four decades. "It's just hard to give up," she concedes. However, a little closer look at the individual reveals her personality. Of herself, our Citizen of the Year replied: "I could never be idle. I'm not a sitter. I just have to be doin' something."

Despite all her activities, the person we honor tonight still finds the time to enjoy life with her husband Albert, her son Mario, her daughter - Town of Colton Justice Cora Walter and her three grandchildren. She also likes to fish and hike.

When asked her philosophy, she said: "I take one day at a time and make the best of it!"

Ladies and Gentleman, a woman whose life is a testament to dedication and unselfishness - our 1983 Citizen of the Year, Mary Gonyea!