

Collection name: Maxwell Collection

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Collection number: MXC-1

Dates: 1984-1990

Creator Name: William and Sue Maxwell

Quantity: 1.5 Linear ft / 3 boxes

Language: English

Biographical & Historical Information: (Obituary) Sue Maxwell, 87, a remarkably strong, vibrant woman who was devoted to her family, friends, pets, and the community she loved, died June 19 at Mid Michigan Medical Center – Midland. The cause was complications of cancer.

Born Oct. 7, 1933, in Saginaw as Lorraine Horton, she was known from birth onward as Sue or Susie. On July 21, 1951, at age 17, she married Bill Maxwell, age 19, in Saginaw. They were married for 60 years until Bill's death in 2011.

The young couple honeymooned at Ossineke in a fisherman's shack owned by a relative of Bill's, never imagining that 15 years later they would move into a house of their own on the beach less than one mile away. Sue lived in that house for 55 years.

Bill, Sue, and their son, Bruce, moved to Alpena in 1963 when Bill accepted a teaching job at Alpena High School. Bill and Sue quickly became friends with Don and Sue Heady, and the four revitalized the Alpena Civic Theatre. Sue remained active in the theatre until only months before her death.

At the theatre, Sue's strength was working behind the scenes, doing the thankless tasks required to keep it running. She ran props for numerous shows, painted sets, took reservations, wrote grants, and – most important – ran the annual season ticket campaign for decades, which was key to keeping ACT afloat.

Sue's greatest contribution to the community was stopping the Michigan Department of Natural Resources from bulldozing and paving large sections of Negwegon State Park to put in a four-lane highway and hundreds of sites for motorhomes and trailers. Working under the auspices of the League of Women Voters of Alpena County, Sue spent years questioning the DNR's plan. For example, she pointed out that the DNR's cookie-cutter design placed many campsites in swamps. The DNR hadn't realized that until she spoke up.

The DNR finally agreed that the 4,118-acre park, located five miles southeast of Ossineke, should remain largely undeveloped and appointed Sue to the board overseeing it. Today, the pristine park offers six miles of some of the most beautiful beaches on Lake Huron, 10 miles of hiking trails, and four rustic campsites.

Sue was a proud member of the League of Women Voters of Alpena County for 52 years, serving in a variety of roles including president. For years she moderated candidate forums that the League sponsored before elections, helping to educate voters. She continued in this role until recently.

Among Sue's many other contributions to the community, she played a major role in building the Band Shell at Bay View Park, played cello in the Alpena Civic Orchestra for over a decade, and was active with the Thunder Bay Arts Council, including serving on its board.

In middle age, Sue started taking classes at Alpena Community College for the pure joy of learning. She never graduated because despite having all of the other credits needed for a degree, she refused to take a required physical education class.

After Bruce left home, Sue returned to the workforce as a legal secretary before landing her dream job as office manager for the Michigan Education Association in Alpena. She worked for the MEA for 10 years.

Sue was relentlessly positive and upbeat, occasionally to the annoyance of grumpier people (like her son). She always saw the best in people and situations – even in her diagnosis of incurable stage 4 cancer two months ago.

Sue vowed to fight the cancer with everything she had. What she didn't fully count on is that cancer doesn't fight fair. Bruce was with her throughout the struggle.

Sue is survived by Bruce and her cherished daughter-in-law, Laura, of Traverse City, a brother-in-law, Joe (Cathy), of Oscoda, a sister-in-law, Susan (Chuck) Dvoracek, of Mesa, Arizona, numerous nieces and nephews, countless friends, many of whom she knew and loved for 50 years or more; and her treasured pets, including her Labradoodle Nathan Detroit and two cats, Figaro and Charlie Chaplin. She was preceded in death by Bill, her brother, Bud, and her parents.

Sue hated funerals, so there won't be one. Instead, her family plans to hold a celebration of her life at a later date when it's safer to do so.

The best way to honor Sue's memory is to hold your loved ones close and make sure they know how much you love them – not just today, but every day.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made to the Alpena Civic Theatre Endowment Fund, c/o Community Foundation for Northeast Michigan, P.O. Box 495, Alpena, League of Women Voters of Alpena County, 307 W. Maple St., Alpena, or Friends Together, 105 Prentiss St., Alpena. [Alpena News]

Scope & Content: Committee work for the creation and building of the Alpena Fine Arts Shell and committee work for the development of Negwegon State Park in Alcona County.

Acquisition: Collected by William and Sue Maxwell through their committee work; donated by Sue Maxwell.

Access: Open for research

Preferred Citation: **item, folder, box** Maxwell Collection, Alpena County George N. Fletcher Public Library. Alpena, MI

Collection Contents:

Box 1: Alpena Fine Arts Shell Committee

Folder

1. Community Recreation Planning [general booklet] (1984)

2. Correspondence (1984-1988)
3. Design of Project
4. Media / Publicity
5. Meeting Notices (1984-1990)
6. Members & other Contacts
7. Minutes (1984-1990)
8. Proposal (1985)
9. Terms of Agreement & other "Use" Policies
10. Treasurer's Reports (1986)

Box 2: Negwegon State Park Committee*Folder*

1. Agendas (1988-1989)
2. Campground Debate & Statistics
3. Consensus Study
4. Correspondence
5. Correspondence
6. Cultural Resources Study
7. Department of Natural Resources
8. Environmental Impact Statement
9. History
10. League of Woman Voters
11. Management
12. Maps
13. Master Plan
14. Meeting Notices (1989)
15. Members & other Contacts
16. Mich-e-ke-wis Park Campground Feasibility Study] (1987)
17. Minutes (1988-1989)

Box 3: Negwegon State Park Committee*Folder*

1. Newspaper Articles (1970s-1980s)
2. Newspaper Articles (1970s-1980s)
3. Public Comments (1989)
4. Public Comments (1989)
5. Recordings [cassette] [unknown]
6. Reports
7. State Parks Policies & Statistics
8. Updates
9. Zoning Options