



Helen Estelle Sullivan

October 11, 1924 - December 24, 2017

HELEN ESTELLE “Stella” SULLIVAN, age 93, passed away on December 24, 2017 after a brief illness. She was born in Houston on October 11, 1924 to Anne Winston King Sullivan and Maurice J. Sullivan, the sixth of their seven children.

She is survived by her beloved sister, Margaret Ann “Margo” Sullivan Hibler and has always missed her other siblings who preceded her in death: Maurice J. Sullivan, Jr., Elizabeth Sullivan Lawler, Charles Fitzsimon Sullivan, F.B. King Sullivan and William Winston Sullivan, M.D. Stella is also survived by 21 nieces and nephews and a number of great nieces and nephews.

Stella was raised in Houston and lived in the city for most of her life, attending St. Agnes Academy from kindergarten to her 1941 high school graduation. As a child, she took private lessons from local well-known artists Ola McNeil Davidson, Emma Richardson Cherry, Ruth Uhler and Grace Spaulding John. She also enjoyed classes at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. After studying architecture at Rice Institute (now Rice University) for three years under the legendary and often remembered Dr. James Chillman, ultimately obtaining a Bachelor of Arts degree from Rice in 1945, she worked at her father’s architectural office and with Birdsall Briscoe as an architectural drafter. In 1950, Stella moved to Michigan where she studied at the Detroit Society of Arts and Crafts and then Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, where

she earned an MFA in painting and design in 1954.

Stella returned to Houston as an energetic member of the artists-driven Contemporary Arts Museum. Her signature “refracted” style of painting and printmaking — design-intensive, colorful and dynamic — found immediate recognition with multiple museum awards and exhibition prizes. She taught painting and printmaking at the University of Houston, Sam Houston State University and at the MFAH’s Glassell School of Art. She held studio classes at her Stella Sullivan School of Art in Rice Village for many years.

Stella’s art was featured in numerous solo and group exhibitions at the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, the Dallas Museum of Art and other museums and galleries in Houston, Dallas and beyond. Her work found homes in public, corporate and individual collections. Stella’s art spanned a wide breadth of media and styles, and she played a founding role in the artists’ collective shop Handmakers which showcased a range of fine art and crafts by local artists and artisans.

A lifelong Catholic, Stella produced her own canon of sacred art including dozens of Madonna paintings in a unique and colorful Modernist style. These were gathered for a solo exhibit at the Museum of Biblical Art in Dallas in 2004. At the same time, the Houston Earlier Texas Art Group and others developed fresh appreciation for Stella’s mid-century art. Renewed interest from galleries followed, including a 50-year retrospective in Dallas in 2005 and several exhibitions in Houston along with other Houston mid-century Modernists. A curated selection of her work in multiple media was included in the Heritage Society’s 2016 exhibit, *This WAS Contemporary Art: Fine and Decorative Arts in Houston, 1945 – 1965*.

For the past 18 years Stella maintained a studio at Art Square Studios on South Main where she continued to paint and draw through the last year of

her life.

A visitation will be held from 4:00 – 7:00 p.m, Friday, January 5, 2018 at Joseph J. Earthman Generations, 234 Westcott Street. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 1:30 p.m., Saturday, January 6, 2018 Holy Rosary Catholic Church, 3617 Milam Street. The Rite of Committal will follow at Holy Cross Cemetery, 3502 N. Main Street, Houston, Texas. All services will take place in Houston, Texas.

For those wishing to honor her memory, the family suggests contributions to Holy Rosary Catholic Church (designed by her father, and where her painting of the Virgin of Guadalupe hangs in the South transept), Rice University, Cranbrook Academy of Art or a charity of your choice.

Tribute Wall

KL

“Karen Lastre lit a candle You were loved by all you touched. I will never forget you my friend. Karen



Karen Lastre - January 07, 2018 at 12:00 AM

KN

“Kathy Reed, niece lit a candle With all my love, Kathy



Kathy Reed, niece - December 30, 2017 at 12:00 AM