

A Celebration of the Life
of
Mary Louise Giesy Vogel



January 1, 1893 -- April 19, 1989

First Unitarian Society
900 University Bay Drive
Madison, Wisconsin

Saturday, May 6, 1989

Service conducted by Michael A. Schuler, Parish Minister
First Unitarian Society

Prelude Clara Cox Fountain, organ

"In Spring" Poem by George Whitney

Reflections Michael Schuler

Mozart's "Allelulia" Louise Giesy Vogel, soprano
Mrs. Russell Colman, piano
(This was recorded in Madison, March 19, 1957)

A Tribute ellsworth snyder,
Music Director
First Unitarian Society

"I'm Not Myself At All" Music and words by
Samuel Lover
(This happy Irish song was recorded in Madison, March 19, 1957)
Louise Giesy Vogel, soprano
Mrs. Russell Colman, piano

"O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee"
Music by H. Percy Smith
Words by Washington Gladden
Sung by All
(This hymn by the minister of the First Congregational
Church, Columbus, Ohio was a favorite of Louise's father)

Memories of Louise's Life Michael Schuler

Brief Recollections A moment for sharing

"How Can I Keep From Singing!" Music: American
Gospel Tune
Words: Early Quaker
Song

Please sing the first and second verses, and conclude by
repeating the first verse.

(This song is borrowed from the Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society's
song book.)

Three Songs:

"Agamedes' Song"

A Poem by Arthur Upson,
Music by Paul M. Giesy

"To Mary Louise"

Words by Ned Giesy,
Music by Paul M. Giesy

"Lullaby"

Words by Ned Giesy,
Music by Paul M. Giesy

Louise Giesy Vogel, soprano
Paul Aron, piano

(These were recorded August 31, 1945, in New York City)

Meditation, with a reading from John Cummins
Michael Schuler

Benediction: John Wheelock's "Song VII"
Michael Schuler

"Sevenfold Amen" by Lutkin

Sung by members of the choir of
the First Unitarian Society

Recessional to West Living Room for refreshments
catered by Virginia Calden

Clara Cox Fountain, organ

The recorded music throughout was produced
by Don Sylvester

Mary Louise Giesy Vogel
January 1, 1893—April 19, 1989

Louise's life was built around her family, her friends, and her music. She loved, admired, and even idealized her parents, brothers, husband, children, and friends. In her eyes, they could do no wrong. And all the rest of the world were fine people, too. Louise could find good in everyone.

Louise had a happy childhood in a loving family. Her parents were members of the First Congregational Church in Columbus, Ohio. They were great admirers of its long-time minister, Washington Gladden, who preached a message of service. Mr. and Mrs. Giesy lived up to this ideal in hundreds of personal ways, and Louise followed their example.

At Ohio State University, where Louise graduated in 1916, she joined the Cosmopolitan Club and fell in love with Ralph Raines Vogel of Toledo, Ohio, who was then the club's president. They were married January 1, 1917.

Ralph was a wonderful husband for Louise. He was someone who could express affection and love—a rare quality in men of that era. He had a delightful sense of humor. He was a responsible person in his work as a civil engineer, as a captain in the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, and as a husband and father.

Louise was able to be with him during World War I, for he was stationed in Honolulu. Their son Jack (John Edward Vogel) was born there. After the war, Ralph and Louise were happily restoring a little farm house outside of Akron, Ohio, and expecting their second baby when Ralph died suddenly of a heart attack.

Louise had the security of knowing that she and her children could find a loving home either with Ralph's parents or with her own. She chose to return to Columbus, where her daughter, Mary Louise Vogel, was born.

During the years that followed she was engaged or seriously considering marriage more than once, but never remarried.

In her parents' home and then in her own home next door to her parents she played her accustomed role as a good daughter, looking to her parents for leadership. When someone was ill, she took hold of the situation as a fine home nurse.

Louise had always been serious about music and these were the years when she accomplished the most in developing her voice. Mr. and Mrs. Giesy shared their home for four years with Olga Joseffy Keane and her little daughter. Olga was a fine coloratura soprano who aspired to a concert career. She introduced Louise to a wonderful voice teacher in New York City, June Burgess. Louise had several opportunities to stay with her brother Paul in New Jersey or to spend a few months in New York, studying with June. June taught healthy ways to use the vocal instrument. Louise worked hard and learned well. This must be why her voice retained its musical quality and she was able to keep on singing throughout her life.

She had many dear friends in Columbus and many good times mixed in with times of anxiety. Her mother had many serious illnesses. Her father had his first stroke in about 1931, and her brother Ned came home from graduate school to take charge. Mr. Giesy's mind was still sharp though he could say only "yes" and "no". Ned conducted brilliant games of Twenty Questions to enable Mr. Giesy to express his thoughts.

Louise's father died about a year later, and her mother in 1938.

Louise's son was a lot like his father in looks, personality, and interests. He was doing flood duty with the Ohio National Guard by the time he was out of high school. He was in ROTC at Ohio State, where he received his geology degree. He was a fighter pilot in the Philippines on December 7, 1941. (Louise didn't hear from him for awhile, and she lost all her hair temporarily.) Jack

(by then known as John) served two tours of duty in the Pacific and went back by choice for a third. Between two of these tours he gave his mother what turned out to be one of the greatest gifts of her life. He invited her to keep house for him in Tallahassee, Florida, where he was receiving training. Besides her joy at being with him, it was there she met the young service wife who later became part of Louise's second family.

John died in an airplane accident at Okinawa just after the war ended. Soon after, Marjorie Ellsworth Watson and her two-year-old daughter Marcie came to live with Louise. This second family kept Louise young.

She stayed active in several music clubs and sang in the choir of the First Congregational Church. She often visited Madison, especially when each of her three grandchildren were born—John Vogel Diehl, Timothy Hunter Diehl, and Alicia Catherine Diehl.

Louise had a lively interest in learning new things and was always open to new points of view. This may be why she took teenagers in stride. (I never remember hearing her criticize her grandchildren's behavior, clothes, or language.)

After she came to Madison in failing health in 1968, the jolly atmosphere of the First Unitarian Society choir warmed her spirit. Choir members made sure she didn't stumble on the steps and helped her keep her place in the music as her eyesight got worse. Choir members gave her rides. Pat Thimmig was her regular chauffeur for a long time, and Music Director Ellsworth Snyder took over and brought her to rehearsals and church from Madison Convalescent Center, and gave her many cherished hugs. (Who have I missed?) She loved the choir parties at Mary Kolner's house. Once the choir gave her a special celebration and dedicated a song to her, ending with "You're our choir sweetheart, inspiration to us all." Louise often said that singing was her best therapy, and for many years the choir made it possible.

For several years, helpful people in the Madison Symphony Chorus gave her similar help and enabled her to go on singing with them.

At age 88, Louise rehearsed the two Schubert masses for the Palm Sunday service, but did not take part in the performances. I think she attended some rehearsals even after her 89th birthday.

The Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society, which she and her daughter joined, also made Louise welcome. On some wonderful occasions, Joe Laurence accompanied her as she sang for music services at Prairie or for entertainments at the Convalescent Center. She loved the Prairie children, who were so open and friendly with adults. (And she had many visits in Ohio with her almost-grandchildren, Nick and Matt Bader, and their parents, Frank and Marcie Watson Bader.)

In her final years, Louise delighted in the sing-alongs at Madison Convalescent Center and enjoyed the compliments of fellow-residents and staff. She and I and her roommate often sang together in the evenings. On some songs, she instinctively provided the alto part, without realizing she was doing it, or added a couple of special notes at the end as the piano might have done. Often I admired the way she would give notes their full extent while I was cutting them short to take a breath.

The last few evenings, we were working our way through the Pilgrim Hymnal, the same copy she used to take to choir in Columbus. By then, she was listening more than singing.

Louise meant a great deal to the nurses and nursing assistants at the Convalescent Center. Her sweet disposition, like her sweet voice, had stayed with her to the end. She was among people who loved her when she died.

—Mary Lou Diehl, Louise's daughter
May 4, 1989