



## Irene Baird

October 20, 1924 - September 4, 2022

Irene C. Baird, D.Ed. died in her home Saturday evening, September 3, 2022, a month before her 98th birthday. Her appreciation for life, family and friends; as well as her lifelong interest in books, art, music and travel belied her age. Irene was born to first generation Americans in a small town in western Massachusetts. She graduated from Smith College, and received a masters degree at the University of Kansas, where she met her husband. Irene and Irwin Baird, a founding faculty member at Hershey Medical Center, moved with their daughters to Camp Hill in 1968. Following her husband's death in 1981, Irene refocused her energy on engagement with the Harrisburg community. At PROBE (Potential Opportunities in Business and Education), she became involved with programs supporting displaced homemakers reentering the workforce.

She began work on a doctorate in education from Penn State Harrisburg, earning her D.Ed. in 1994 at the age of 70. Soon after, she assumed a position as Affiliate Assistant Professor of Education at Penn State Harrisburg. She simultaneously directed the Women's Enrichment Center at Penn State Harrisburg Eastgate Center.

Her post-doctoral work focused on women, extending classes to female offenders at the Dauphin County Prison. In 1999, the program expanded to include classes for male offenders.

Classes involved reading and discussion of works by Shakespeare as well as by contemporary writers who had been successful in making life changes in

spite of experiences comparable to those of the inmates. Class participants produced their own writing, some of which has been published in two small volumes. Irene's humanities-based program became her defining focus, and continued to the point that COVID restricted access to the prison.

Irene produced several articles focusing on adult education and the prison system. Her work earned her accolades, including 2008 Distinguished Alumna Medalist from Smith College, and 2010 Living Legacy designation - part of Harrisburg's 'SusqueCentennial' Celebration.

In addition to educational pursuits, Irene enjoyed many Market Square Concerts, and was actively involved with the Susquehanna Art Museum, serving a long term as a Board member.

Irene is survived by her daughters Lisa Morrison Baird (Steven Morrison), Nina Baird, and Mara Baird, as well as by a beloved circle of friends.

A small celebration of life ceremony will be held at a later date.