

2005

Elisabeth F. Ruffner
1403 Barranca Drive
Prescott, Arizona 86303.4501

BIOSKETCH

Elisabeth Friedrich travelled on the train in 1940 with her mother to Prescott to meet her fiance's family, and never returned to live in her native Cincinnati, Ohio.

Lester Ward (Budge) Ruffner and she had met at the University of Cincinnati and upon completion of his academic career he had enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps to avoid being drafted at the beginning of World War II. They were married in Prescott and in 1941 their first daughter, Melissa was born.

Budge spent three and a half years in the service while Elisabeth and Melissa made do in Prescott, with wartime restrictions as a way of life. However life was certainly better for them in this wonderful small town than it would have been in Cincinnati, and they considered themselves lucky to have wonderful friends and family in Prescott, and of course an extended family in Cincinnati.

Elisabeth sought employment and worked for more than three years for Florence B. Yount, MD, her father-in-law Clarence E. Yount, Sr. and Robert N. Looney, both older physicians who with "Dr. Pat" had taken over the care of the region's medical needs. The younger physicians including Florence's husband Ned, had all left with the National Guard medical service at the beginning of the war.

Upon Budge's return from the service, he took over the family business, Ruffner Funeral Home, and Elisabeth worked for him as book keeper. Two more children were born, Rebecca in 1947 and George in 1950. Elisabeth became the den mother for Cub Scouts, a Brownie and Girl Scout leader, a member and chairman of the library board, founder of the hospital auxiliary and hospital board member. She was one of three activists who set up the hospital district and founded Prescott Community Hospital, a voluntary non-profit institution which took over the county hospital and now serves the entire area as Yavapai Regional Medical Center.

Elisabeth became interested in historic preservation and founded Yavapai Heritage Foundation, Arizona Preservation Foundation and the Prescott Area Arts and Humanities Council. She served many years as a member of the state Historic Sites Review Committee and on the Arizona Historical Advisory Commission.

Awards to Elisabeth include a U.S. Department of the Interior citation, Trustee of the Years from the American Library Association, and the City of Prescott Elisabeth Ruffner Award for Excellence in Historic Preservation.

Elisabeth was initiated into Chapter Y. P.E.O. in 1950 as a charter member and remains active today in library, historic preservation, open space concerns and in enjoying her family and friends.