

# Ruth Filice \* 1921 - 2011

SUNDAY, JULY 24, 2011

## OBITUARIES

### Saratoga activist dies at age 89

Filice spent decades crusading for a cure for Parkinson's disease

*Mercury News*

Ruth Filice, a member of a pioneering Santa Clara Valley winemaking family and a crusader for a cure for Parkinson's disease, died of natural causes Wednesday at her Saratoga home, 11 days short of her 90th birthday.

Married to Peter Filice, the president of the family-owned San Martin Winery, Ruth Filice became a prominent figure in local society in the 1950s and 60s, entertaining and traveling extensively.

Her determination after her husband was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in the early 1980s led her to become a major backer of Dr. William Langston's Parkinson's Institute in Sunnyvale.

"Back then, they were doing a lot of research on the disease, and they started to suspect it was caused by pesticides or environmental issues," said her son, Craig. "She pursued that and felt she had found the best care for him by contacting Dr. Langston."

Partly at Ruth Filice's urging, Langston, who had been at Valley Medical Cen-



Filice

ter, founded the institute in Sunnyvale. She went on to become secretary to the board and hosted a number of fund-raising events to establish it

financially.

"She raised more money than their development person ever did," said her daughter, Candace Bestow. "She'd pick up donations on a cruise ship."

Ruth Ilene Gildemeister was born on July 31, 1921, in Melvin, Iowa, the daughter of a Lincoln-Mercury dealer and a homemaker. She moved to California in the 1940s and got a job at Bullock's department store in Los Angeles.

On a vacation with a girlfriend at a Fresno hotel, she met a young man from Santa Clara Valley, Peter Filice, who had come to the Central Valley to buy grapes for the

family-owned winery. The two married in 1946.

With his brothers John, Michael, Frank, and brother-in-law Pasquale Lico, Peter Filice amassed 800 acres of vineyards in the valley. Between the 1940s and the time it was sold in 1973, San Martin Winery became the nation's eighth-largest.

After the sale, Ruth and Peter continued to farm, nurturing a large cherry orchard in Coyote Valley, until Peter's death in 1988. The Filice and Lico families co-developed the Eagle Ridge Golf Course in Gilroy, located on a former vineyard.

Ruth Filice is survived by her son, her daughter and seven grandchildren and step-grandchildren. The funeral will be at 11 a.m. Tuesday at the Chapel of the Oaks in Oak Hill Cemetery in San Jose.

The family asks that donations be made to the Parkinson's Institute, 675 Almanor Ave., Sunnyvale, CA 94085.

## Ruth Filice Resident of Saratoga

Ruth Filice died peacefully at her home on Wednesday morning, July 20, 2011. Ruth was born in northwestern Iowa on July 31, 1921. She moved to California in the 1940's where she met her husband, Peter. Peter later became President of the San Martin Winery. Ruth and Peter were married for over 40 yrs and had 2 children. Peter died in 1988. Ruth was active in local charities and served as Secretary of the Board of The Parkinson's Institute of Sunnyvale, Ca. She is survived by her children, Candace (Jeffery Bastow) and Craig (MaryJane); grandchildren, Brandt, Jeffery, Max and Morgen Bastow and step grandchildren Douglas (Ashley) and David Madden, and many nieces and nephews. Friends and Family are invited to her Funeral at 11:00 AM on Tuesday, July 26 at The Chapel of the Oaks, located at Oak Hill Cemetery, 300 Curtner Ave, San Jose, Ca. Donations in her name may be made to The Parkinson's Institute, 675 Almanor Ave., Sunnyvale, Ca 94085.

## Alameda Family

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