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**Sarah E. FORBES**

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NEWPORT NEWS - The Virginia Peninsula and the medical profession lost an icon on Friday, June 24, 2011, when Dr. Sarah Elizabeth Forbes was killed in a tragic automobile accident. Dr. Forbes would first want to be remembered as a compassionate physician, who was dedicated to her patients. Dr. Forbes' extraordinary talents led her to be a successful real estate developer with her hallmark achievement in Virginia being the Warwick Medical Center. Her vision for making real estate come alive was showcased in Nags Head and Currituck County, N.C., and at her famed Windmill Point Restaurant. Born in Currituck County, she was the only child of Mary Brock and Dexter T. Forbes. She moved to the Virginia Peninsula in the early years of her childhood and resided in Newport News until her death. She had a special bond with her mother who worked as an educator, and took a second job selling encyclopedias and dictionaries to help put Sarah through medical school.

Dr. Forbes began her education in local schools, graduating from Newport News High School in 1945. After obtaining her bachelor's degree from the University of Rochester in New York, she studied medicine at the Medical College of Virginia in Richmond. Her perseverance helped her overcome the challenges of being a woman in the field of medicine at a time when only one or two women were accepted into a medical school class.

Throughout her life, Dr. Forbes was a woman of many "firsts." Under the mentorship of Dr. Mason Andrews, she completed her residency in obstetrics and gynecology, becoming Norfolk General's first female resident, and eventually chief resident of OB/GYN. In 1958, she became the first female physician to open a private OB/GYN practice in Newport News, in which she successfully and lovingly practiced until May of this year when she retired from medicine.

Dr. Forbes was the first woman to be selected to the board and the first female president of the Boys and Girls Club of the Peninsula, where she was honored as a member of the "Wall of Fame" - the first and only woman to be so honored in the club's 65 year history.

Sarah was often honored for her contributions to the organizations she served and the community she loved. Among her many awards were the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities' Humanitarian Award in 2007 and the Medallion Award, the highest recognition The Boys and Girls Club of America



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presents to volunteers.

Her concern for her patients, affection for animals, and love for her community led to her engagement in and support of many professional and community organizations. She served as president of the Virginia Peninsula Academy of Medicine, the Newport News Chapter of the American Cancer Society, the Newport News Medical Society, and the Peninsula Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Sarah was a philanthropist. Her generosity has benefited many organizations, including The Family Planning Council, First Baptist Church of Newport News, The Peninsula SPCA, the Mariners' Museum, Riverside Hospital, and Christopher Newport University. Her estate plan is designed to continue her legacy of caring and sharing.

There was no bigger supporter of CNU than Dr. Forbes. She recognized its impact on the Peninsula and the importance of its educational mission. Dr. Forbes provided the lead gift for a new science building at CNU, to be named for her mother Mary Brock Forbes. Additionally, Dr. Forbes' generosity will make a bell tower on CNU campus a reality and the bell will be that of the SS United States, which was donated to CNU by Dr. Forbes.

Dr. Forbes embraced the historical mission of the Mariners' Museum and its world class stature, to which she added, not only by her generosity, but by donating numerous memorabilia from the SS United States. Dr. Forbes had the vision to rescue and preserve many of the artifacts of the SS United States, proudly built at the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company.

Dr. Forbes was a passionate animal lover, especially of her prized dogs. Her leadership role in helping the SPCA grow and flourish was something about which she was justly proud.

Pioneer, Physician and Philanthropist, a life well lived and one to be admired. She will be missed.

A memorial service to celebrate Dr. Forbes' life will be held at 3 p.m. Wednesday, June 29, at the Music and Theatre Hall at the Ferguson Center on the campus of CNU.

In lieu of flowers, it is requested that you honor Sarah's memory by making a contribution to: Boys and Girls Clubs of the Virginia Peninsula, 11825 Rock Landing Dr., Newport News, VA 23606; Christopher Newport University, 1 University Way, Newport News, VA 23606; Peninsula SPCA, 523 J. Clyde Morris Blvd., Newport News, VA 23601; the Sarah E. Forbes M.D. Charitable Foundation, 739 Thimble Shoals Blvd., Suite 105, Newport News, VA 23606 or to your own favorite charity. *View and post condolences on our online guestbook at [dailypress.com/guestbooks](http://dailypress.com/guestbooks).*

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