



## Melle Madeleine Gibbs

August 14, 1921 - February 24, 2016

Melle Madelleine Matthews Gibbs, age 94, gently passed away Feb. 24, 2016, at her home in Yreka, California, lovingly surrounded by her family.

Born Aug. 14, 1921 in Atlanta, Georgia to Edward Murray Matthews and Susan Doak Lyle Hard Matthews, Melle grew up with her four sisters, Sue, Barbara, Patricia, and Elaine in Nashville, Tennessee and Ojai, California. As a teenager she lived near Hollywood and set her goals to be a singer and actress. She studied voice, ballet, drama, and speech at California School of Music and Arts, and was proficient playing classical guitar and piano.

In 1946 -1947 Melle was under contract to 20th Century Fox Studios. They sent her for advanced training at the Actor's Laboratory Theater, along with Marilyn Monroe. Melle spent 1948 in the national touring company of "The Desert Song." In 1949, Melle relocated to New York, living at The Rehearsal Club. Her many credits included, "Cajun Holliday" and a lead on the "Philco TV Playhouse" At her career zenith in 1950, Rodgers and Hammerstein cast Melle in their original hit Broadway musical, "South Pacific."

Melle was a life-long learner and loved passing on her skills. She taught piano, voice, speech and drama for over 40 years and joined the Music Teachers Association in 1974. Melle earned a BA in Social Ecology from UC Irvine in 1982 and became Director of Activities and Counselor for Regents

Point, Irvine.

Melle's lasting influence will be in her hundreds of students, whom she encouraged to persevere and become the best they can be. Her inspiration will be missed by her children: Deborah, Marcus, Tamara and Rhisa (William, decd.); grandchildren: Tamara, Erin, Manya, Lauren, David, and Talya (Daniel, decd.); and great-grandchildren: Forest, Akasha, Raven, Ezekiel, John, and Thomas; her sister, Elaine Matthews, and her beloved, Richard Reynolds.

At this time, no services are to be held.