

DR. JOAN ELIZABETH DE PENA



DR. JOAN ELIZABETH de PENA, Ph.D. December 3, 1923 - August 31, 2009 Peacefully, on Monday, August 31, 2009, Joan Elizabeth de Pena (nee Finkle) passed away following a short but courageous battle with cancer. She was 85. Joan's memory is cherished by her daughter Katia and her son Morgan (Caroline), and by grandchildren Aurora, Melanie and Curtis. Following undergraduate degrees from the University of Nebraska (1945) and Columbia University (1948), Joan was most proud of the Ph.D. she earned in 1959 from the University of Indiana. Her degree in Anthropology was the culmination of many years of hard work and dogged determination to make her mark in a world at that time dominated by men. With her degree in hand she travelled to St. Louis where she taught Anthropology and Anatomy at St. Louis University. She moved to Winnipeg and the University of Manitoba in 1966 to continue the development of the Department of Anthropology. After 20 years at the U of M, including a six year stint as head of the department, she retired from teaching in 1987. As a physical anthropologist, Joan had a passionate interest in human growth and development. She began her career conducting research in Puerto Rico and continued with studies of the Inuit of Canada's North. As an educator, she was a unique, memorable, and inspiring teacher who earned the utmost respect of her colleagues. She held membership in several Professional Societies including The American Anthropology Association, The American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Association of Physical Anthropologists, The Canadian Association of Physical Anthropologists, The New York Academy of Sciences and Sigma Xi (honours) to name a few. A strong-willed, independent and dignified woman, she spent her retirement enjoying her garden, pet cats and science fiction novels, along with visits from family, friends, and associates. She also provided financially to several charities and non-profit organizations. In keeping with Joan's wishes, cremation has taken place. A celebration of her life will be held at her home at 787 Waverley Street in Winnipeg on Sunday, September 13, from 12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m. Friends are invited to drop by for a visit to share their memories of Joan. The family would like to graciously thank the doctors, nurses and staff at St. Boniface Hospital, and the nurses and staff from the home Palliative Care Program, for their compassion, respect, and dignity during this difficult time. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to either the Winnipeg Humane Society or to the B.A. and E.W. Finkle Prize in Anthropology, a bursary set-up by Joan in her parent's names at the University of Manitoba. Cheques for the B.A. and E.W. Finkle Prize in Anthropology should be made to University of Manitoba and mailed to University of Manitoba, Department of Development, 179 Extended Education Complex, Winnipeg, MB, R3T 2N2.