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THE ST. AUGUSTINE RECORD

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SATURDAY MAY 31, 2008

staugustine.com
A DIVISION OF THE ST. AUGUSTINE RECORD

McIntire's active life recalled

St. Augustine activist died Thursday

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Margery D. "Peg" McIntire, a St. Augustine icon who worked tirelessly on projects for peace and justice, died at her home Thursday night, three days after taking part in a Memorial Day demonstration.

She was 97 years old.

"She will be missed, not just by us, but by a very broad community," said her son, Jo McIntire.

He and his wife, Sali, were by her side when she died late Thursday.

"It's unbelievable the amount of e-mails I'm receiving," Jo McIntire said. "Many people I know. Many people I don't know."

Several people were at McIntire's Ocean Gallery home Friday morning, "all talking about the many ways Peg affected their lives," her son said.

Many who called or visited were directed to her blog site, pegmcintire.blogspot.com, that Jo gave his mother for Christmas. Posted on the site is a working draft of the obituary Peg McIntire wrote a few weeks ago.

PLEASE SEE MCINTIRE/3A



Peace activist Peg McIntire, left, holds hands with Renee Mintz before a protest on Feb. 14, 2006. By **PETER WILLOTT**, peter.willott@staugustine.com

"It was designed in homage of her expecting this day," he said. "I'm just sorry there's not more on it."

"Her life was a long one and a very, very full one."

A memorial service will be held in a few weeks.

Peg McIntire was born Oct. 2, 1910, and raised in Woodmere, Long Island, N.Y.

She was a talented pianist, good student and athlete at Woodmere Academy.

McIntire received a scholarship to Vassar College in 1927 and later transferred to Columbia University.

She wrote that, one night while living in New Orleans, she went to a "shabby YMCA meeting hall" to hear Gordon McIntire talk about his efforts to organize a union of small farmers, tenant farmers and sharecroppers in Louisiana.

They were married six years later.

The couple later lived in Washington, D.C. Peg McIntire worked for the Office of Price Administration and as a freelance speechwriter for the National Education Association. Her husband worked for the Bureau of the Budget.

The couple and their two children, Jill and Jo, moved to Rome in 1952 when Gordon took a job with the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

Peg McIntire became the round-the-clock assistant to Henry Hennigson, producer of the MGM film "Ben-Hur."

Gordon McIntire lost his FAO job because of accusations by Sen. Joseph McCarthy.

After five years of hearings, depositions, findings and appeals, McIntire was vindicated and compensated for legal costs.

He died from emphysema in 1969.

Peg McIntire moved to St. Augustine in 1980 and became a founding member of the Coalition for Peace and Justice 26 years ago.

"You're not going to meet many people like Peg McIntire in your life," said John Linnehand, former chairman of the organization. "She made many contributions over the life of the Coalition.

"Her unique contribution was her involvement with the Peace Camp for youth, which has been going on for



Peg McIntire dedicated her life toward the pursuit of peace and justice in the world. **Record file photo**

close to 20 years."

The two-week summer camps in Hampton are sponsored by the Coalition.

"She was present at all those camps, contributing her energy, time and interest," said Linnehand. "She would just dive right in with the young people. And they would pick up on her energy."

"She was an amazing example of how age does not have to be a problem in relating to young people."

McIntire founded Grandparents for Peace, St. Augustine, which now has about 100 members.

She attended the last eight demonstrations at Fort Benning, Ga., an effort to close the School of the Americas, which trains Latin America military officers.

The links on her blog site also connect to "Alternatives to the Death Penalty," "The Friendship Association," "Activism," "Iraq" and "Impeach."

"She was tiny but mighty," said Rabbi Mark N. Goldman of Temple Bet Yam about the diminutive McIntire. "I was always impressed by the passion of her ideas and her idealism."

"In Judaism, we believe we don't just wait for God to do it all. We have to engage in acts of loving kindness that help to heal and repair the world."

"She did that, in what she fought for, in the way she thought the world should be."

McIntire's concern for others cut across most traditional barriers.

She was born and raised

Jewish, taught Christian Sunday School, joined the Center for Positive Living for a few years and was a long-standing member of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship.

"She had this inner power," Goldman said. "She called it passion. There was kind of a bright light in her."

Goldman said it was somehow appropriate that one of her last actions was the Memorial Day demonstration.

"It was like her last hurrah," the rabbi said. "She was doing her peace project. Then she went home and, I guess, sort of shut down."

"God gave her one more act before the final curtain."