



## Dorothy Christine Nelson

August 21, 2024

Dorothy Christine Nelson (Johnson), 96, of Cresskill, NJ, formerly a long-time resident of Harrington Park, NJ, passed away peacefully at her home on August 21, 2024 surrounded by her family.

Dorothy was born in Audubon, NJ on May 22, 1928. She and her sister, Ruth, grew up with a father who had immigrated from Tysnes, Norway and a mother who was a Daughter of the American Revolution. Her home was filled with music. The first piece of furniture in her parents' home was a baby grand piano. She played the viola in the NJ All-State Orchestra, sang alto in the NJ All-State Choir, and always sang in her church choir, starting with the Junior Choir at the Audubon Lutheran Church and into her 90s with the Harrington Park Community Church Choir. She was often the soloist for the National Anthem at Harrington Park's Memorial Day celebrations. She said, "I believe when music fills your life, it is hard to be depressed." More recently, she has taken great joy in attending her son's clarinet and glee club concerts, her grandson-in-law's organ recitals, and especially watching her great-grandchildren sing in their church choir and perform impromptu piano and flute recitals. She loved giving gifts of anything musical.

A graduate of Audubon High School, Dorothy went on to attend Jefferson School of Nursing, earning her nursing degree. At Jefferson she met her husband, Robert M. Nelson, MD, (Bob), whom she married in 1948. Her

nursing career started at Columbia University Hospital; because of this, Bob had to drive her across the George Washington Bridge, in labor, to deliver each of their three boys there. Later, she became the nurse/ secretary/ x-ray technician/ personnel director/ office manager at Dr. Bob's pediatric practice, first in Closter and then in Harrington Park. She was a proud mother when her son became a neonatal doctor and a proud grandma when her granddaughter became a pediatric ICU nurse.

Nursing was her career but her first gainful employment, at 16, was selling her various made-to-order cakes to neighbors and friends. She would often thank her parents because they would donate their rations for butter, sugar, and eggs to her entrepreneurial endeavor. Her love of baking lasted her entire life. She baked a kransekage for her granddaughter's wedding, she baked cream cakes for her grandson's wedding and for every God Jul celebration. She baked an angel food cake with buttercream icing for every birthday and in January this meant 3 cakes over 4 days. Friends and family have been recipients of plates of her Christmas cookies for decades.

Starting in 1953, she spent many summer days at Lake Winnepesaukee, NH. She made many trips to Disney World with Bob and grandchildren and took a memorable cruise to Alaska. Dorothy discovered her father's Norwegian family members and reintroduced her extended family to those relatives living in Tysnes. She made two iconic trips with herself as the tour guide, visiting her family in Tysnes and Bob's family in Dokka and Meland.

Fifty-four years ago, Dorothy co-founded the Meland Foundation with her husband. A non-profit 501(c)(3) public charity, the foundation is dedicated to providing medical and health information; inspiration and financial support to caregivers, families and children facing serious illness; and encouragement and financial support to those medical service providers who are dedicated to helping these families. Over the years, Dorothy has served as President and

Treasurer on the Meland Foundation's board and published the new edition of the children's book "Hang On, Hester!" and the first edition of "A Compass Rose."

She is survived by her three sons and their wives, Robert and Brenda, Paul and Ellen, and Carl and Barbara; 5 grandchildren, Rebecca Elton (Norman), Erik Nelson (Katie), Sarah McCall (Jeremy), Amy Nelson (Chelsea) and Kristen Nelson; and 4 great-grandchildren, Haley and Jackson Elton and Kennedy and Camden Nelson who affectionately call her "Super Grandma". Additionally, a multitude of nieces, nephews, grand-nieces and grand-nephews will feel her loss.

The family is grateful for the love and support of so many friends at the Community Church, the great friends she established at the Cresskill Commons where she resided for the last 18 years, the wonderful staff at Park Medical who guided her medical care, the aides from Senior Helpers who provided companionship and help, and the nurses from the Visiting Nurse Association who made her final days comfortable.

There will be a Celebration of Life for Dorothy on Saturday, September 7 at 11 am at the Community Church of Harrington Park. A reception will follow.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Dorothy's memory can be made to:

The Community Church Foundation, Harrington Park, 1 Spring Street,  
Harrington Park, NJ, 07640

The Meland Foundation for Family Education, PO Box 234, Harrington Park,  
NJ 07640

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

SEP 7. 11:00 AM (ET)

Community Church Harrington Park  
1 Spring St.  
Harrington Park, NJ 07640