

MARGUERITE KEY PFEIFLE



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1907 - 1981

The Spirit of Community Service

RALPH WALDO EMERSON wrote that "The only gift is a portion of thyself." Marguerite Key Pfeifle's life exemplifies this act of selfless giving. Quiet, yet determined, she typifies the countless Montanans who have contributed to the fabric of the state in unobtrusive and unheralded ways. The strength of the Montana character derives from these personal contributions.

ON NOVEMBER 6, 1907, Marguerite was born to Frank and Ida Key at the Berke Ranch near Augusta. To gain a high-school education, she moved into Augusta and worked for her bed and board. Later, she attended Great Falls Commercial College and gained experience working for several local institutions, including the Montana Deaconess Hospital.

DURING WORLD WAR II, Marguerite served as Supply Section Inspector at East Base (now Malmstrom Air Force Base). At the war's end, she took a position with the Montana Bank where she remained for almost 25 years, until she retired in 1971 as one of its most-valued employees.

MARGUERITE'S MARRIAGE to Edwin G. Pfeifle in Great Falls in 1950 commenced a long and rewarding relationship for both parties. The couple's exploration of ghost towns led to an interest in rock-hounding. Through the Arrowhead Mineral Club of Great Falls, the Pfeifles developed skills in collection, cutting, setting, and displaying Montana crystals, fossils, sapphires, gold, and silver.

MARGUERITE DEVOTED COUNTLESS HOURS assisting the state's mineral and gem groups during the 1960s. Her efforts to unite the state's various mineral groups resulted in the formation of the Montana Council of Rock and Mineral Clubs in 1963. In 1969, Marguerite and Ed Pfeifle proved instrumental in the Legislature's designation of the Montana Sapphire and the Montana Agate as the state's official gemstones.

THROUGHOUT THE 1970s, Marguerite focused her considerable energies preparing genealogical histories of the Cotte, Key, and Pfeifle families. This last work remained unfinished when she died on February 28, 1981. This project reveals the manner in which Marguerite perceived life: as an endless trek of challenge and discovery, to which educating and tireless work must be applied. Because of this devotion to her family, to her vocation and avocations, and to her community, Montana is decidedly richer.

