

Margaret Rose (Peggy) Addy: No Will and 94 Heirs

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Peggy Addy - Undated photo sent by Peggy's cousin Flo

Margaret Rose Addy might never have come up on the Aschenbrener family radar screen. She had long ago lost contact with this side of the family. But in 2010 she became a topic of animated family conversation. Let's begin at the beginning...

Margaret was born on February 28, 1925 in Pomona, California to Edward Herman Semrau and Anna M. Aschenbrener. Margaret's mother Anna had been born in Stetsonville, Wisconsin on June 13, 1884, the seventh child of George and Monika Aschenbrenner. Her father Edward Semrau (Semerau) had been born on September 28, 1889 in Butternut, Wisconsin just a few miles north of Park Falls, Wisconsin.

Margaret was the second child in the family. An older brother William, born in Wisconsin on July 18, 1917, died in infancy. Apparently, Edward and Anna Semrau moved to Pomona, in southern California, sometime between 1917 and 1925. No other children were born to the couple and Margaret was raised in Pomona as an only child.

She married Herman Harold Addy and settled in Glendora, California. They bought a home there in 1953 and Margaret went to work for Bank of America. She retired from the bank after 40 years as a Loan Officer. She was preceded in death by her husband, who died on October 16, 1979. Margaret and Herman did not have children. After a courageous battle with cancer, Margaret passed away on Monday, June 7, 2010 at Foothill Presbyterian Hospital in Glendora at the age of eighty-five.

Margaret was a Glendora resident for over 50 years. She remained social after her retirement, although her home was her private sanctuary. Margaret was always well-groomed and attractively dressed. Holidays were spent with her husband's family. She had a couple of close girlfriends with whom she enjoyed shopping and trips to Las Vegas. On Fridays, she went out for pizza with the next door neighbors. Following her funeral, a note was posted on her online guestbook page: "Peggy was a long-time and favorite member of our Bank of America 'G.O.B.S.' retirement club. All of our members will miss her."

No will was found upon Margaret's death in 2010. Apparently, she had provided no instructions concerning her death other than having a burial plot next to that of her late husband. She left a sizeable estate. Margaret had no children and no living siblings. Her nearest relatives, the only ones with whom she had any interaction, were her brother-in-law and her brother-in-law's daughter. However, according

to California law, they were not in line to inherit any part of the estate because all of Herman Addy's assets had gone to Margaret upon his death and became her property. With no will, the laws of inheritance follow blood relatives. Margaret's parents, aunts and uncles were dead. Under the law, her heirs were her first cousins and, if deceased, their descendants and so a probate research firm was contracted to find the lawful heirs.

Margaret had a total of 29 cousins on the Aschenbrener and Semerau side. Altogether, 94 heirs were identified. The estate was settled at the end of 2011 and funds were dispersed soon after. People used their surprise windfall in a variety of ways. Some did something nice with their families or addressed special needs of their own. Some shared with the Addy side of Margaret's family. A number of heirs donated a portion of their inheritance to charity. One group of cousins collectively donated to the Glendora Public Library in her name. Margaret's own wishes concerning the disposal of her property and possessions upon her death are unknown and are the subject of much speculation. One thing is certain: the settlement of Margaret's estate benefited many people. Perhaps it also prompted a few conversations on the importance of having a will.

Sources of information: U.S. Census records of 1920 & 1930; Social Security Death Index; CA Birth index; Letters from Brandenburger & Davis Probate Research; Margaret Addy's online obituary; Telephone conversation with the daughter of Margaret's brother-in-law in January of 2012.



*Posted on the Donors Wall, Children's Reading Room,
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