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Viola 'Vi' Pike, 98, Former Darien Resident Who Outlived Six Bridge Groups

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Viola Emma (Porter) Pike died peacefully on May 7 at the age of 98, following a brief illness.

Vi spent her final days at home in Sandwich, Mass., with her daughter Cindy ever-present, and other family members in regular attendance.

She was predeceased by her husband, Arthur J. (Art) Pike, and her son, Arthur J. Pike, Jr. (Pikey), the former in 1989 and the latter in 1993.

Vi's parents, Alexander and Elizabeth Wilson Porter, came to the U.S. from Ireland at the turn of the 20th

century. Together, they created a family of five — Bob, "Biggie," George, Libby, and Vi — and a 36-acre farm in Lexington, Mass., where Vi was born on April 22, 1919.

— [an obituary](#) from *Douglass Funeral Home*

As the youngest of the five, growing up in the bleak Depression years, Vi said she was greatly loved and protected, and had a magical and carefree childhood. As the "baby of the family," she said she was made to feel special by them all, even during the most trying of times nationally.

In return, she produced a large fund of stories, both written and narrated, about her years on the family farm, which was strategically situated between Lowell and Boston, and had many visitors.

Her parents were a constant source of help for the local community, providing food and work for hard-pressed locals and outings to the seaside for their children. She spent a lifetime volunteering with Meals on Wheels and Red Cross Blood drives. Her own spirit of neighborliness pushed her to polish the brass plaques of the Lexington memorial benches.

Vi was a natural-born letter writer and storyteller, who grew up to become, in addition, an avid reader, bridge player, (outliving six bridge groups), and conversationalist.

Her family had encouraged free-flowing discussions around the kitchen table, a practice which continued through most of her nonjudgmental life. Following the loss of her sister Libby, at age 92 in 2006; she was its last remaining member.

For many years, Vi lived in Darien, close to her husband's New York employment, where they raised their two children and sent them to school. During Art's lengthy selling trips, Vi became an independent person, working at *Grade Teacher Magazine* and Fairfield Trust Bank, and spending summers on Pear Tree Point Beach where, with her friends, she completed the New York Times crosswords and read current bestsellers every day. On Art's retirement, the couple returned to Lexington, where Vi was reunited with her siblings and their children.

Though always describing herself as "blessed," "indulged," and "lucky," Vi knew major tragedy, losing her father, husband, and only son at relatively young ages. But, in contrast, she was elated by her daughter's twin sons, Brendan and Erin Coyne, both now in Florida, and the presence of a great-grandson, Brayden.

Throughout her long life, Vi delighted in trips to Ireland, to be among the Wilson and Porter families from whom she descended. Her brothers and sisters, and their children, often joined her on these trips to the Old Country, and following her lead, returned with a fund of stories and abiding memories.

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Vi and her sister introduced their children and neighborhood children to the joys of camping at Nickerson State Park on Cape Cod, another rich source of stories and jokes.

Before her move to Sandwich, Vi put together a family history of life on the family farm for all to share; in addition, she was interviewed a number of times, for television and newspaper, about Lexington town history, and these gleanings helped enrich the town archives.

Vi remained hale and hearty well into her 90s, loving literature, bridge, movies, her garden and regular walks, and all aspects of nature — especially a tasty ripe tomato. Her love of beauty and design was constantly reflected in the colorful and classically-styled clothing she chose to wear.

In all family gatherings, she was a vibrant standout. She will be sorely missed by her family and friends, and will be remembered as the last, and one of the most singular, of its founding stock.

She will live on in her many wonderful letters and stories, and will be remembered with love by her family: her daughter, Cynthia Coyne of Sandwich; grandsons, Erin and his wife April and Brendan Coyne of Tampa, Fl.; great-grandson Brayden Coyne; sister-in-law, Barbara Anderson; nieces: Janet Czarnetzki (Gerry); Martha Murphy (Fred); Laura Carlyle (Ralph); Sharon Burbidge (Rick); Laurie Shibles (Dwight) and nephew, Todd Pike (Oscar) and the far-flung members of the Porter and Wilson clans.

Her wake will be held from 9 to 10:45 a.m., Thursday, May 11 at Douglas Funeral Home, 51 Worthen Road, Lexington, Mass. Her funeral will follow at 11 a.m. at the Church of Our Redeemer, Merriam St., Lexington.

In lieu of flowers donations may be made to Vi's favorite charity — [Heifer Foundation](#), P.O. Box 727, Little Rock, AR 72203. Interment will be at Westview Cemetery.

— *The photograph with this article [previously was published](#) in *Wicked Local Lexington*.*