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Barbara Dillon, 90, Worked at The New Yorker, Wrote Children's Books, Active Volunteer

Author : David Gurliacci

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Date : April 2, 2018

Barbara Dinkel Dillon, 90, of Darien passed away on March 28, 2018.

Born on Sept. 2, 1927 in Glen Ridge, N.J., Barbara grew up in Maplewood, N.J., where she graduated from Columbia High School. She went on to attend Pembroke College in Providence (then the women's school of Brown University), following in her father's footsteps as a Brown alumnus. She graduated in 1939 with a B.A. in English.

After graduation she took a job as an editorial assistant at the New Yorker magazine in Manhattan. While working there she encountered many of the great staff writers of the day, including John Updike and

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longtime editor William Shawn, and as a freelance writer sold her first story, “The Grand Champion Peanut Racer,” to Woman’s Day magazine at the age of 23.

After meeting on a blind date, she married Harold Dillon, a career IBM executive from Wilson, N.C. They married in 1952 and together raised three daughters. She and Harry lived in Devon, Pa. and Princeton, N.J. before settling permanently in Darien in 1968. For the past two and a half years she lived at Maplewood in Darien, where the kindness and good humor shown by the staff each day was much appreciated by Barbara and her family.

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

In addition to following the activities of her three girls and later her grandchildren in tennis matches, field hockey games, soccer games and ballet recitals, Barbara continued to write, ultimately authoring nine children’s books, including *The Beast in the Bed*, *The Teddy Bear Tree*, and *What Happened to Harry?* One of her books, *A Mom by Magic*, was made into an NBC TV movie produced by Walt Disney Television. She spoke at several area schools about her writing.

Barbara was interested and interesting, witty and bright. She was a devoted friend and treasured her many long-lasting friendships. She maintained a full life; a passionate reader who loved great books, children’s literature and the New York Times Sunday Book Review.

She could be counted on to have seen the latest movies and make recommendations about what had just come to the Darien Playhouse. Regular trips into New York and to the theater were always part of her life.

She played tennis, golf, paddle tennis and bridge as a member of the Country Club of Darien. Community involvement was important to Barbara, and she volunteered in a variety of organizations. For many years she taught pre-reading skills to underprivileged children in Stamford, and was a volunteer for twenty-five years at Person-to-Person in Darien.

Barbara was predeceased by her husband Harold Dillon, with whom she shared nearly 50 years of marriage. She is survived by her daughters Lisa Tullis and husband Rob of Melrose, Mass, Brook Meres and husband Jonathan of Bedford, N.Y., and Nina Bodner and husband Andrew of Ridgefield.

She is also survived by her brother, Peter Dinkel of Los Angeles. She was the loving “Bubba” to eight grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

Last but certainly not least, she was the devoted human to Welsh Corgi dogs Abby, Tucker and Gus, with whom she enjoyed many good walks with plenty of dog biscuits in her pockets.

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A celebration of Barbara's life will be held privately by her family. Donations in Barbara's memory may be made to [Person-to-Person](#), 1864 Post Road, Darien, CT 06820.