

Renee Davis, 85, Governess for Actress in Darien, Master Seamstress

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Date : April 24, 2016

Renee (Sidler) Davis, 85, of Black Rock (formerly of Stamford), died peacefully at home on Wednesday, April 20. She was born in Basel, Switzerland on May 14, 1930 to Ida and Alois Sidler, one of three children.

The family divided their time between homes in Basel and the Swiss Alps. Renee traveled widely as a young adult, working as a governess for families in Geneva, Switzerland; London; Spain; and for legendary film star [Madeleine Carroll](#) in Darien.

She ultimately settled in Stamford, where she married the love of her life, the late Moses L. Davis, in 1957. Their union, a courageous choice at a time when interracial marriage was illegal in 26 states (and most state

laws were not struck down until 1967), thrived until Moses's passing 52 years later.

Renee was a master seamstress, working professionally for sewing conglomerate Singer Company, teaching sewing crafts to senior citizens, and making clothing for her treasured children and grandchildren throughout their lives. Her skills were in great demand by friends and family. Renee was especially proud to design and stitch an elegant wedding gown for her daughter.

— [This obituary](#) is from the *Leo P. Gallagher & Son Funeral Home*

Renee loved to swim, bake, read, garden, birdwatch, host large family gatherings with her husband, and vacation in Switzerland, Cape Cod and Aruba.

She also loved to knit. For Renee, knitting was like breathing: natural and constant. She devoted hours each day to knitting sweaters, hats, scarves and blankets for local churches, Native American schools, impoverished Appalachian communities and the families she sponsored through various charitable organizations.

She knit for nearly anyone who asked — and those who didn't. Whenever she heard that a relative or acquaintance was expecting a child, she would knit baby blankets, booties and other layette items to welcome the new life.

Renee was widely lauded for her generosity and received numerous honors for her philanthropic work. Renee was a glass-half-full optimist and lived her life with courage, tenacity and an ever-present undercurrent of joy.

She is survived by three children, Rafaele Davis and his wife Gina, of Norwalk, Gabriele Davis and her husband Thomas Hunt, of Litchfield, and Josef Davis, of Black Rock; three grandchildren, Tasha, Eva and Briana; two great-grandchildren; and numerous nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her beloved husband Moses and her youngest son, Conrad.

In lieu of flowers, the family is requesting that donations be made in Renee's name to [Christian Appalachian Project](#), P.O. Box 55911, Lexington, KY 40555-5911.

The family will hold a private service and burial. [Online condolences may be left](#) by visiting the Leo P. Gallagher & Sons Funeral Home website.