



Barbara Ward Perry

April 9, 1923 - February 14, 2015

Barbara Ward Perry passed away Saturday morning February 14, 2015 at Red Bud Hills Retirement Living Center. She was born on April 9, 1923, in Boston, Massachusetts, from old New England ancestry, going back to the first settlement in Plymouth. Her father, Lauriston Ward, was an anthropologist who taught at Harvard University. Barbara attended Vassar, then Sarah Lawrence colleges. At the latter she concentrated in writing poetry and prose under the tutorship of the New York literary critic Maxwell Geismar. Later she met and married Whitall N. Perry (1920-2005), author of the opus, *A Treasury of Traditional Wisdom* (1971, reed. 1998 and 2008).

Encountering Whitall Perry spurred a joint interest in Eastern spirituality. Upon meeting the celebrated Orientalist Ananda Coomaraswamy in New York, they were inspired to venture East. On their way to India, visa delays obliged them to stay in Cairo where they became acquainted with the French metaphysician René Guénon and developed a lifelong friendship with the English poet and scholar, Martin Lings. After settling in a home next to the Pyramids, the Perrys summered in Switzerland, where they met the German philosopher and metaphysician Frithjof Schuon. Political unrest in Egypt then forced the Perrys to leave. They moved to Switzerland where they, along with their children Mark and

Catherine, became next-door neighbors of the Schuons. This relationship and proximity endured forty-six years until Schuon's death in 1998. They also undertook a number of journeys with the Schuons across Europe, Turkey, Morocco, and out to the American West where they established special bonds with members of the Lakota and Absaroka tribes; in fact, they were adopted into the Lakota tribe. In 1963, Whitall and Barbara received Indian names from Benjamin Black Elk, the son of the famous Lakota medicine man. In 1980, they moved to Bloomington, Indiana.

Widowed in November of 2005, Barbara Perry spent the rest of her life in a retirement community in Bloomington. In 2013, she lost her brother, Lauriston Ward Jr. She is survived by her children Mark, author of *On Awakening and Remembering* and *The Mystery of Individuality: Grandeur and Delusion of the Human Condition*, and Catherine, professor of French at the University of Notre Dame, and by her granddaughter Souleyma.

Private family services are being conducted by Allen Funeral Home and Crematory 4155 South Old Highway 37 and online condolences may be sent to the family at www.allenfuneralhome.org.