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BETTY BOXOLD / 1927-2008

Editor preferred writing to cooking

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By Betty Shimabukuro
betty@starbulletin.com

I never met Betty Boxold, but we have a connection. Besides a name, we share an affinity for newsprint and recipes, so I'd like to send a little aloha her way.

In this case, aloha means goodbye.

Boxold was the food editor for the Star-Bulletin a generation ago, doing what I'm doing right this minute, except at a typewriter instead of a computer.

She died Feb. 26 at age 80. Friends and family say their last good-byes at services on Saturday.

Her son Gregory and his wife, Jann, came by with stacks of yellowing Star-Bulletins and file folders containing old typed articles, testaments to the way newspapers used to be put together.

Boxold was born on April 4, 1927, in Los Angeles. She earned a degree in journalism and political science at the University of California at Berkeley.

She moved to Hawaii in 1958 with her husband, Frederic, an electrical engineer with Hawaiian Electric Co. She was hired at the Star-Bulletin as Windward correspondent, which Gregory said meant covering events large and small, with camera -- and often, her kids -- in tow.

"She would always have us in the photo," he recalled.



He remembers a particular story about a pineapple barge from Molokai that overturned and spilled its cargo. "One morning I was walking the dog and the whole beach was filled with pineapples." He fetched his mom. "She went down with her camera and took pictures of us with the pineapples."

In the mid-'60s she became the paper's food editor, writing a weekly column with the straightforward name of "Betty's Column." It was filled with chatty items collected from around the world that focused on all manner of eating:

» "Hello! -- This seems unbelievable, but atomic scientists in Los Alamos, N.M., are eating 'hot beads' of Uranium-235 to see what effect radiation has on the human system ..."

» "Know where sauerkraut first came from? Not Germany. China. In the Third Century B.C., Emperor Shih Huang used a form of kraut to supplement the rice diet of the men building the Great Wall. The kraut was cabbage, fermented in rice wine."

As a reporter she covered events from the opening of the Mauna Kea Beach Hotel in 1965, to the Lanikai Luau -- headline: "My goose is cooked, said the Lanikai pig."

"She had this trick," Gregory said. "She was a good cook, but she didn't really like to cook. So she got to be best friends with Hawaiian Electric's cooking department."

When a reader called with a food question, Boxold would pretend to be her own secretary and take a message. Then she'd call HECO, get the answer and call the reader back, this time as the food editor.

I should try that.

After a few years, Boxold left the paper for a job in real estate, but her son says, "Her first love was always journalism."

She is survived by her sons, Frederic, Gregory and Jonathan; and five grandchildren.

Services will be at 10 a.m. Saturday at St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, 93 N. Kainalu Drive in Kailua. At noon, her ashes will be spread off Lanikai Beach, where she lived for nearly 50 years.

Donations may be made to the Journalism Alumni Fund, Graduate School of Journalism, University of California-Berkeley, 121 North Gate Hall, Berkeley, CA 94720.

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