



(Central High School Yearbook, 1940  
Courtesy of the Grand Rapids Public Library)

## Margaret Porter Hoyle

Born: January 19, 1923

Death: May 30, 2000

Father: Benjamin Church Porter Jr.

Mother: Wilma L Porter (née Kern)

Margaret Porter Hoyle was born in her family home on 2128 Porter St SW, Grand Rapids, MI on January 23, 1923. She was one of three children born to her father, Benjamin Church Porter Jr. (1889-1948), and mother, Wilma Porter (1900-1991).

Margaret's great-great grandfather, James Porter, settled in Grand Rapids, MI from New York in the mid 1800's and established a family lineage of great significance to Grand Rapids.

Margaret's great-grandfather, John Porter, purchased land in the present day area of Wyoming. He was a successful farmer who used the land to farm wheat after the Civil War. He married Elizabeth Rossman, who became a midwife to all the women in the surrounding area.

His son, Benjamin Church Porter Sr., was given an option to either continue the family farm or to attend college. He chose to pursue a degree at Michigan Agricultural College, now known as Michigan State University, and graduated in 1884. He worked as a notary public and established the South Grand Rapids State Savings Bank, located on the Southeast corner of Division Avenue and Burton Street. At the onset of the Great Depression, the Bank went into receivership and became the People's National Bank.

The banking legacy continued with Margaret's father, Benjamin Church Porter Jr. He attended Michigan State College and graduated in 1911. He worked as a banker at the South Grand Rapids State Savings Bank until after the Great Depression where he worked in the mortgage department of the People's National Bank, which was later bought by Old Kent Bank.

As a child, Margaret had a formal upbringing in a three-generation household. She walked five blocks to school every day and attended Boulevard Park Grade School. Growing up she was always “conscious of being an outsider,” a result of having dark skin in a primarily Dutch immigrant community. She graduated fifth in her class at Central High School in 1940 and later attended Northwestern University where she studied liberal arts and graduated cum laude in 1944.

After completing her education, Margaret worked as a social case worker for the Welfare Department until she married her husband, David Hoyle (1918-2007). After marrying, she quit her job to become a homemaker and raise her four sons, Stephen, David, Timothy, and Gregory. Margaret thoroughly enjoyed being a homemaker, describing it as “wonderful fun.”

Once Margaret’s sons left for college, she decided to pursue a career in teaching. She attended night school at Grand Rapids Junior College to receive her Michigan Certificate as well as a masters degree from Michigan State. She taught at South High School for five years before transferring to Junior College where she taught for over twenty years.

While teaching at Junior College in 1971, Margaret suffered from severe health issues. After going deaf in one ear, medical professionals diagnosed her with a brain tumor. In January, 1972 she had an acoustic neuroma operation at Mercy Health in Chicago that left her with “a number of afflictions to overcome.” Immediately after the surgery she was bedridden, having lost part of her brain that controls balance and motor functions. After months of recuperating, and with the help of her oldest son, she returned to teaching at Junior College. However, ten years later her tumor returned and she underwent a second procedure at Mayo Clinic in Grand Rapids. This second operation left her with a paralyzed face but successfully removed her tumor.

Despite her setbacks in life, Margaret remained optimistic. She continued teaching at Junior College, and in 1982 she attended a national symposium for acoustic neuroma patients. It was here that she was able to connect with others experiencing similar physical and emotional hardships. Margaret never forgot to count her blessings in life, having said that her personal trials were a way for her to cultivate sympathy and understanding for others.

Margaret passed away on May 30, 2000 and was buried by her family at Fulton Street Cemetery.

External Links and Resources:

<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=21784317&ref=acom>

Margaret Porter Hoyle obituary. (2000, June 1). *Grand Rapids Press*, p. D11. Microfilm, Reel June 1-10, 2000. Grand Rapids Public Library.

**HOYLE (PORTER) —** Margaret Porter Hoyle of Ada passed away Tuesday, May 30, 2000 at her home. She was born in 1923 in the same house on Porter Street where her father was born in 1889. Margaret was preceded in death by her parents, Benjamin and Wilma Porter, and by her brother, Ben. Survivors include her four sons, Stephen of Grand Rapids, David P. (Therese) of Delton, Timothy of Pennsylvania, Gregory in Japan; her sister, Elisabeth MacCallum of Hendersonville, NC, two grandchildren, Christopher and Monique; nieces, nephews, and a very special friend, Harold Langereis. Mrs. Hoyle was a graduate of Central High School and Northwestern University. She taught at both South High School and Grand Rapids Junior College. Her wish, "Be kind to someone who is not expecting it". At her request, cremation has taken place. A Celebration of Life Memorial Service will be held at Fountain Street Church on Monday, June 5 at 2:00 p.m. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Fountain Street Church or Visiting Nurses Hospice. The family is being served by  
**Metcalf & Jonkhoff Funeral Service**  
4291 Cascade Rd. SE at Kenmoor, E of I96  
[www.metcalfandjonkhoff.com](http://www.metcalfandjonkhoff.com)