

The New York Times

IRENE R. HALLIGAN

Obituary



HALLIGAN--Irene Reuter died peacefully on March 11, 2013 in her beloved New York City surrounded by her daughters.

Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani appointed Irene R. Halligan Commissioner of the New York City Commission for the United Nations, Consular Corps and Protocol in July 1997, a position she held until February 15, 2002. Prior to that Mrs. Halligan served as a Commissioner and Chief of Protocol since 1994. Mrs. Halligan's office was directly responsible for coordinating official visits to the World Trade Center site following the events of September 11, 2001. She personally escorted heads of state, prime ministers, foreign ministers and ministers of defense to the site.

A lifelong resident of New York City, Mrs. Halligan's background included extensive media experience as creative and production associate with NBC as well as independent television syndicators. She was also Director of Public Relations and advertising for Chelsea National Bank. Mrs. Halligan regularly and lovingly gave back to the causes she adored as a Board Member to; The Drama League of New York, The Gracie Mansion Conservancy; The Sutton Area Community, Inc.; Creative Alternatives of New York; The Soldiers, Sailors & Airmen's Club, The United Nations Development Corporation and as President of Interfaith Neighbors. She was a lifelong member of The West Point Society and a founding member and Board Member of the America's Camp Foundation for the children and siblings who lost loved ones in the attacks of September 11th.

Her political prowess was invaluable in her current and previous service as First Vice-Chairman of the New York Republican County Committee and as President of the Women's National Republican Club from 1985 to 1989; New York Delegate to the Republican National Convention of 1984 in Dallas, in 1988 in New Orleans, and Houston in 1992; a hostess for three RNC site search committee visits during the three years of 1994 and 1998. Irene Reuter was born on August 30, 1929 in Queens, New York to William and Anna Reuter. Irene met and married John DeBenham in 1959 and they had two daughters Kyle and Beth. That marriage ended in divorce. While summering in 1968 on Fire Island, she met Ted Halligan on a blind date arranged by friends. Irene and Ted married two years later on Valentine's Day. This happy union began a 26 year marriage that combined her family of two daughters and his family of three children, Teddie, Mark and Laurie.

The beautiful Irene Halligan will be remembered for her wry humor and charming demeanor. She commanded a room elegantly and led the world of protocol with ease and grace. Her introductions were memorable and she had the power to make everyone in her midst feel like a King and Queen.

Mrs. Halligan is survived by her brother, Thomas Reuter of Nyon, Switzerland, her daughters, Kyle Beau de Lomemie and husband, Guillaume of Cody, Wyoming, Beth DeBenham of Stamford, Connecticut and by her step children, Theodora O'Neill and husband, John, Mark Halligan and Laurie Halligan. She was the beloved grandmother of Ted, Julia, Hattie, Meghan, Erinn, Jamie and Abigail and she was thrilled to meet her great-grandchildren, Honora and Malachy born a few weeks ago.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, April 20th at Church of the Incarnation, 209 Madison Avenue at 2 o'clock in the afternoon. Irene Halligan was a devoted New Yorker and a lifelong theatre lover.

Her family has asked that in lieu of flowers gifts be made to The Drama League and the Gracie Mansion Conservancy.