

# Mrs. Timmins remembered as 'vibrant sprit and a stoic Swede'

By MARY BROWNFIELD

MARJORIE TIMMINS, a Carmel resident for seven decades and the mother of former councilwoman Barbara Livingston, died at home last Thursday, weeks shy of her 99th birthday.

"She was gone. Just like that, she went from one world to the other," said her live-in caregiver of three years, Mike Biele. "We'd never seen anyone go like that. It's only in the old Hollywood movies where someone goes so peacefully, you don't even know they're gone."

Impressive even in her passing, Mrs. Timmins affected many lives — from family members and coworkers, to the children she cared for as a Cub Scout den mother and the people she met as a longtime volunteer.

"She never let anything negative influence her," her daughter said. "She overcame whatever adversities — she was a strong person and just loved life."

Born July 29, 1906, in San Francisco to Swedish immi-

*For 50 years she volunteered at the Red Cross — canvassing Carmel to raise funds, working in the canteen at Natividad hospital, and organizing blood drives — until failing vision forced her to retire.*

See **TIMMINS** page 12A



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When the house next to former Carmel City Councilwoman Barbara Livingston's (left) went on the market, she convinced her mom, Marjorie Timmins, to buy it. They were neighbors for 16 years.

# TIMMINS

From page 1A

grants Gustav and Augusta Sahlberg, Mrs. Timmins suffered a burst appendix at age 6 and was hospitalized. Initially too weak to walk, she recovered on a farm in La Honda and later attended a one-room schoolhouse there before the family moved to Burlingame, where she graduated from Sequoia High School in 1924.

Marjorie Sahlberg married Frank Timmins, and they had two children, Barbara and Frank. In 1930, when Barbara was 2, Mr. Timmins was struck by polio.

Mrs. Timmins "became a Christian Scientist and adopted that power of positive thinking," Livingston said.

The family moved to Carmel in 1936 and lived on Lincoln Street in a home that is now Christopher's restaurant. In 1940, they built a house near the Forest Theater.

## Half-century of service

Mrs. Timmins embarked on her 50-year volunteer career with the American Red Cross in 1942.

"Mrs. Vanderbilt Phelps, who owned a horse ranch at the current site of Los Laureles Lodge, would drive into Carmel in a used limousine and take us to a cottage on her property to make bandages for wounded soldiers," Mrs. Timmins wrote in her "Memories of the Red Cross."

She canvassed Carmel to raise funds, worked in the canteen at Natividad hospital, and organized blood drives until 1994, when failing vision forced her to retire.

The city council and then-Mayor Ken White honored her, and Livingston's partner, Bob Kohn, dedicated a bench outside the Carmel chapter house in her name.

Mrs. Timmins worked at Village Hardware and Neill Engineers to put her daughter through Stanford. Her coworkers would torment her with crazy pranks "just to hear her laugh," Livingston said.

"One time, she left work to find her tiny Renault parked across the sidewalk, wedged in between a tree and her office."

Soon after Mr. Timmins died in 1987, Livingston convinced her mother, whose eyesight was declining, to move out of the family home near the Forest Theater.

"The house next door came onto the market, and I ran over and told the owner, 'Don't show it,'" Livingston said.

*'She would bark at me, and I'd bark back at her, and sometimes she'd just reach out and kiss my hand and smile. And she always had those bright blue eyes.'*

— Mike Biele

two."

When her caregiver, Mike Biele, first met Timmins in 2002, he was warned that she might be difficult. But they got along famously.

"She would bark at me, and I'd bark back at her, and sometimes, she'd just reach out and kiss my hand and smile," he said. "And she always had those bright blue eyes."

"I loved her, and she loved me."

Livingston emulates her mother, sometimes by accident.

"I'll startle myself by actions and things I say, and I'll stop and think, 'Oh my God, that's just like my mother.' And of course, I look like her," she said. "I loved her energy, and her need to solve problems, always wanting to help people with any problems they had."

Mrs. Timmins — called "Tim Tim" by her family — leaves her brother, Earl Sahlberg of Belmont, his wife, Yvonne, and their children; daughter Barbara, and partner Bob Kohn; son Frank of Oakland; grandson Michael Brunn Livingston and his wife, Laurie Foster, and their children, Shayla, Ryan and Zoe, of Vermont; grandson Brian Fox Livingston, his wife, Elaine, and their daughters, Alix and Rory, also of Vermont, and a large extended family and many friends. She also leaves behind her beloved Corgi, Corky, whom she adopted from the animal shelter.

"Tim Tim will be remembered as a vital force in the lives of those who knew and loved her," Livingston wrote in her mother's obituary.

Memorials may be made to the Friends of Carmel Forest, P.O. Box 5067, Carmel, CA 93921, or to the SPCA, P.O. Box 3058, Monterey, CA 93942-3058. Family members plan a celebration of her life sometime in July.

They remodeled the house, and mother and daughter were neighbors for the next 16 years.

"She was always my greatest, staunchest friend and supporter," Livingston. "She couldn't do enough for me."

During her 12 years on the Carmel City Council, Livingston kept her mother up to date on politics. She would read her stories from The Pine Cone and always invited friends over to celebrate her birthday.

"And she always had her vodka tonic at night," Livingston said. "Sometimes