

Francis Wadsworth Birch



MELROSE — Francis Wadsworth Birch, of Melrose, formerly of South Dennis, died peacefully and surrounded by his family at the Winchester Hospital on Dec. 4, 2009, after a lengthy battle with COPD. He was 82.

Francis was born in Cambridge on Jan. 15, 1927, and lived with his family in Belmont until he graduated from Belmont High School. He then enlisted in the Army, where he proudly and honorably served his country during World War II.

In 1950, he married Barbara Beardsley in the Belmont Unitarian Church.

Together they settled in Lexington in 1953, and lived there for more than 21 years while they raised their four children. They later moved to Natick and then in 1992 finally settled on Cape Cod. Initially they lived in Eastham and then later in South Dennis. They moved to Melrose in April of this year.

Fran worked for Ionics Corp. in Watertown for many years as a product expeditor. Previously, he had worked for Itek in Bedford and RCA in Waltham.

Mr. Birch was an active and devoted member of the Unitarian Universalist Meeting House in Chatham, where he was a founding member of its men's group. He was also a longtime member of the Cape Cod COPD Support Group; the Nauset Newcomers, and the Lexington Chapter of NAFCA. He was also a member for many years of the Lexington Volunteer Fire Department.

Fran leaves his wife of 59 years, Barbara Beardsley Birch; children, Leslie B. Ebert and her husband Joseph of Medway, Alison B. Birch and her husband Matthew Starr of Melrose, Meredith W. Keaveney of Foxboro, and Dana W. Birch and his wife Tish of Fort Mill, S.C.; siblings, Eleanor Wilson of Aurora, Colo., Sylvia Robinson of Newington, Conn., Louise Carr of Bend, Ore., and Richard Birch and his wife Nancy of Hollis, N.H. He is also survived by eight grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews.

Relatives and friends are kindly invited to attend a memorial service, at 1 p.m., on Saturday, Dec. 12, 2009, at The Unitarian Universalist Meeting House in Chatham, 819 Main St., Chatham. The Rev. Edmund Robinson will officiate. Interment with military honors at The Massachusetts National Cemetery in Bourne will be private. There are no visiting hours.

Memorials in his name may be made to the Cape Cod COPD Support Group, c/o Dorothy Pike, 404A Great Marsh Road, Centerville, MA 02632, or to the Unitarian Universalist Meeting House, 819 Main Street, P.O. Box 18, Chatham, MA 02633.