

by Angel Kumari

# Queenie Torigian

“You have talent. You should continue doing art,” said Queenie Torigian’s third-grade teacher. From that point on “Queenie” was a true artist engulfed in the world of art. “Our mother was a life-long learner, the life of the party, and a true friend,” remarks her daughter, Alysia Kehoe. Queenie, a Lexington resident of over 20 years peacefully passed away on August 14, 2021 at the age of 100 years, eight months, and 14 days old. Her soul continues to live through her passion of artwork and the lives she touched.



Born on January 1, 1921 in Istanbul, Turkey to late Armenian parents John and Shakeh Torigian, Queenie and her family fled to France when she was almost three years old. Then, as a bright, nine year old girl with her family, she moved to New York, later completing her education at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and McDowell School of Fashion. Eventually life relocated her to the low country; she lived in Lexington near her two daughters, Alysia Kehoe and Claudia Ellis.

Queenie’s artwork collection contained a variety of art styles, including watercolor, acrylics, oils, needle-

work, and Japanese art and sculptures. Any style of artwork--you name it--she experimented with it! She frequently painted in her artist’s studio containing every canvas, paint, brush, and color available. “When neighbors would see the studio light on late at night, they would say, ‘there is Queenie up there painting,’” Alysia recalls.

The creative art process started for Queenie with visualizing an idea and the medium she wanted to use to best capture that idea. After the general foundation was determined, she would go to work creating her intricate but complex art pieces with various materials. In the beginning her artistic style consisted of traditional-style paintings of landscapes; later she transitioned into contemporary art containing abstract objects, shapes, and even fish.

Queenie was the neighbor that always greeted you when she was on the porch. She enjoyed the company of her friends and family. Aside from art, she loved playing classical piano, cooking, playing video games, and her favorite card game, Skip-bo. She was also an active member of the Shepherd’s Center group and an expert at flipping homes as a business. She even practiced water aerobics until the young age of 97!

“She (Queenie) loved the Lexington community because her daughters, friends, neighbors, and community all resided here,” says Alysia, “she was proud to be a great-grandmother to Liam, Kenyon, Alex, and Seb. Her legacy lives on through her artwork.” Alysia continues, “Her memory lives with her loving friends locally, and with family—you are missed Queenie!”

Her artwork is of such a unique variety and skill, it is something you must witness to appreciate. Many pieces were stowed away because she felt that they were not “quite done,” a characteristic of many talented artists. About 80 pieces of her artwork collection will be showcased and for sale on Oct. 13th, 15th, and 28th at Lexington United Methodist church to benefit Mission Lexington and The Shepherd Center. ■

