MARGUERITE KEY PFEIFLE

1907 - 1981

The Spirit of Community Service

RALPH VALEO EMERSON wrote that, "The only gift is a portion of thyself." Marguerite Key Pfeifle's life exemplifies this art of selfless giving. Quiet, yet determined, she typifies the countless Montanans who have contributed to the fabric of the state in unobtrusive and unheralded ways. The strength of the Montana character derives from these personal contributions.

ON NOVEMBER 6, 1927, Marguerite was born in Butte and Lida Key in the Boston Range near Anaconda. To gain a high school education, she moved into Anaconda and worked for her bed and board. Later, she attended Great Falls Commercial College and gained experience working for several local institutions, including the Montana Deaconess Hospital.

DURING WORLD WAR II, Marguerite served as Supply Section Inspector at Fort Benning, Georgia. After the war's end, she took a position with the Montana Bank where she remained for almost 25 years, until she retired in 1971 as one of its most-valued employees.

MARGUERITE'S MARRIAGE to Edwin D. Pfeifle in Great Falls in 1938 commenced a long and rewarding relationship for both parties. The couple's exploration of ghost towns led to an interest in rock-hounding. Through the Archaeological Society of Montana and the Montana Mineral Club, the Pfeifles developed skills in collection, cataloging, setting, and displaying Montana minerals, fossils, sapphires, gold, and silver.

MARGUERITE DEVOTED COUNTLESS HOURS assisting the state's mineral and gem groups during the 1960s. Her efforts to secure the state's various mineral groups resulted in the formation of the Montana Council of Rock and Mineral Clubs in 1963. In 1969, Marguerite and Ed Pfeifle served instrumental in the Legislature's designation of the Montana Sapphire as the state's official gemstone.

THROUGHOUT THE 1970s, Marguerite focused her considerable energies preparing genealogical histories of the Cost, Key, and Pfeifle families. This last work remained unfinished when she died on February 28, 1981. This project reveals the manner in which Marguerite's personal life, an endless vein of challenge and discovery, is etched in the heart of the community. Only because it is dedicated to her family, to her profession and avocation, and to her community, Montana is decidedly richer.