# Former U-M regent lived life to the hilt

herself to many causes, Irene Ellis Murphy stayed involved, whether it was setting up social programs over-seas, or in politics and community

seas, or in pointers and community
The 89-year-old Democratic activist and longtime Birmingham resident and businessweman died Moay morning of kidney failure at
William Beaumont Hospital in Royal
Oak. She most recently lived in
Farmington Hills,
Murphy "didn't want a funeral of
any kind — she wanted a party,
sald Sharon Murphy Keyes of Birmingham, her only daughter. Keyes
aid a memorial service would be
planned to include Murphy's many

'Irene lived a life of whirlwind activity and constant service."

> - U-M Regent Philip Power chairman of Suburban Communications

Iriends and admirers. Murphy donated her body to science.

"Irene lived a life of whitiwind activity and constant service," said U-M Regent Philip Power, chairman of Soburban Communications, which poblishes the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. He knew Murphy all his life.

"She was a competent, and efficient regent of the U-M and she was an actively engaged member of the Birmingham community — a city

which she dearly loved all her life,"
Philip Power said.
Eugene Power sat on the U-M
Board of Regents with Murpby when
be served from 1957 to 1956. "She
was a very clyic-minded, sympathetic individual," he said. "She was progressive, a liberal regent."

gressive, a liberal regent."

SINCE OCTOBER of 1987, Murphylived at the American House, an independent living rethrement real-nece in Farmington Hills, where she was remembered as being always active. "She was an Individual and did her thing," said activities director Carol Hamilton. "She made life very interesting around here."

One American House resident recalled that Murphy would take a taxicab to Troy each Thursday, where she participated in a discussion group with Rabbi Shevin Wine of the Birmingham Temple, who became a close friend. She also had daily chats with residents after lunch, where she would share stories of her Ille.

Murphy came from a family of

lunch, where she would share source of her life.

Murphy came from a family of self-proclaimed "revolutionaries."
She was born in Indiana, ratsed as a Methodist, and spent her school years in Detroit and Ann Arbor.

After marrying Harold Murphy, she became involved with the all-en-

compassing lives of the Irish-Catho-

lic Murphys, which included her brother-to-law Frank Murphy — a judge, mayor of Detroit, governor of Michigan, governor General of the Philippines, US. Attorney General and US. Supreme Court Justice.

Because of Frank Murphy's association with the Philippine Islands, freme Murphy spent much time there, where she became involved in the freedom movement and was a major force in developing cottage industry in the 1850s. She also founded Irene Murphy Imports to market the willage product manufactured there and carned her living through that company until three years ago, her daughter said.

ALSO IN THE PHILIPPINES, she served as deputy director of war a left for a year in 1945 and was a United Nations social affairs officer there from 1947 through 1950. She stopped going back in 1973 when former ruter Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law.

Murphy maintained that worldly view, offering ber bome and hospitality to 28 Rossian scholars visiting the U.S. in 1961. One of these, Leo Kostikov, had a reunion with Murphy in 1983, recalling his feelings. "I came to this country absolutely alone, without (speaking the) language," he said. "But Mar. Murphy very carefully took care of it. She did it in a genteel way. Her house became our home. "It is because of her that I love this country and understand the people of this country."

Despite her many overseas interests, Murphy was also community-minded. ALSO IN THE PHILIPPINES, sh

Longtime Birmingham resident irene Ellis Murphy, pictured here in 1979, was known throughout the world as a champion of resocial causes. She died Monday at the age of 89.

She worked toward establishing low-income housing for seniors in Birmingham, and was always concerned about the local environment.

She also spent time in heart.

cerned about the local environment.
She also spent time in local protests in Shain Park in Birmingham Barnia Washington, D.C., earning her a spot in the "Red Squad" files — polytical surveillance tools used by the Michigan State Police from the 1950s through 1970s.
When the existence of these files

was brought out through the court system, she commented "they're en-titled to investigate crime, but not political opinion."

political opinion."
Through most of her adult life in
Birmingham, she lived with her sister in a house designed in the 1940s
by architect Wallace Prost.
Murphy is survived by her daughter, Sharon Murphy Keyes, two
grantchildren and a great-grandchild.

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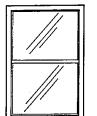
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