

## El Cerrito Soropti-Vista



### PORTRAIT OF A SOROPTIMIST

By Marlene Leverett

Dorothy Reeder Sarnes was born in June 15, 1910, the eldest of five children, in Ericson Nebraska. She graduated from Cairo High School in 1926 and went two years to Grand Island Business College. Among her early accomplishments was being crowned Miss Hall County 1928. She was married to Cecil Sarnes on June 21, 1930 at Hastings Nebraska.

During the depression, Dorothy and Cecil decided to go to California but they soon found jobs in California were hard to find too. Nevertheless, Dorothy soon found a job with an interior decorator in Oakland. Her husband was drafted into the Service in 1941 and served three years at Fort Ord and Camp Roberts. In the meantime Dorothy went to Laney College in Oakland to brush up on her secretarial skills. She went to work for an Oil Purifier in Oakland and had to put out a payroll for 150 employees. In 1944, Dorothy and Cecil went to work for the Stone Brothers in Berkeley and worked there until 1955. At that time they had an opportunity to buy an interior decorating business known as Mauerhan's located on Bonita Avenue in Berkeley (This structure was a three-floor brick building formerly a stable in the old days and now a historical building). In 1966, Dorothy and Cecil decided to liquidate the business and bought into Miramonte Gardens in Moraga.

In 1961 Dorothy joined Soroptimist International of Berkeley. She was President from 1968 to 1969. Later as Treasurer Dorothy had the job of closing the books of S.I. Berkeley in 1993. She disbursed \$50,000 into the Berkeley community but it took 1 ½ years after S.I. Berkeley closed to liquidate the corporation and satisfy the State of California and the IRS. In 1993 both Dorothy and Marlene Leverett moved their membership to S.I. El Cerrito

Among Dorothy's many accomplishments as a Soroptimist, she wrote a history of the Berkeley Club and of Violet Ward. She compiled and published a book on the life of Violet from Dr. Fisher's notes. Dorothy took care of Dr. Fisher's affairs until the Dr's death in 1988. She has served as District I Secretary of South Western Region from 1970 to 1972. She was SouthWestern Region Secretary from 1972 to 1974. Bess Combs was Governor. This is the time of her husband's death but she continued to carry on her responsibilities. Governor Bess always said, "Dorothy was the best darn Secretary she ever had". SouthWestern Region was very large and this meant a lot of travel for Dorothy and Governor Bess. In 1976 at the Spring Regional Conference, South Western Region (155 Clubs) was divided into three smaller regions. Founder Region being one of them. Dorothy was Secretary Pro-Tem with Governor Bess Combs for this division.

In 1978 Dorothy was appointed by the Regional Board to become District I Director due to the death of the elected Director Jinx Mann. There were twenty clubs in the District at that time. District I included all of Alameda, Contra Costa and Solano Counties. Following this Dorothy also served as adjustment Chairman for two terms and she served several years on the Founder Region Fellowship Committee.

Her other accomplishments were 15 years as Treasurer and Director at the Berkeley City Club.

It has been through her great efforts along with Past Governor Susan Joyce and many others that there is a Violet Richardson Award at SIA, and alot of Violet's memorabilia is safely in storage at Soroptimist Headquarters Philadelphia.

Dorothy has portrayed all the qualities of a devoted and great Soroptimist:

The Sincerity of Friendship  
The Joy of Achievment  
The Dignity of Service  
and The Integrity of Profession

She has been my mentor, my confident, my inspiration and my dearest friend for forty years. I will deeply miss her.

Dorothy passed away on Wednesday, February 24, 2010 in Walnut Creek California.

She lived a full and eventful life for 99 years, 8 months and 8 ½ days.