

Edith "Jackie" Ronne

1919 - 2009



Edith "Jackie" Ronne, who with the wife of the expedition's chief pilot was one of the first two women to overwinter in Antarctica, during the Ronne Antarctic Research Expedition (RARE) of 1946-48, died in Bethesda, Maryland 14 June 2009. She was 89.

Jackie was a pioneer in Antarctic history and known as "Antarctica's First Lady," also the title of her 2004 book (see *The Polar Times*, January 2005, p4). At the last minute, she went along with her husband (my father), Capt. Finn Ronne, on his private expedition as the expedition's recorder/historian. She became the first American woman to set foot in Antarctica, and she and the wife of the expedition's chief pilot became the first women to overwinter in Antarctica. They spent 15 months together with 21 other members of the expedition in a small station they set up on Stonington Island in Marguerite Bay.

She is the namesake of the Ronne Ice Shelf (second-largest on Earth) which was previously called Edith Ronne Land. Finn, who discovered and mapped that previously unknown territory during the RARE, named it in her honor.

Jackie returned several times to Antarctica, including on a Navy-sponsored flight to the South Pole in 1971 and a trip back to her former base at Stonington Island in 1995 as guest lecturer on the expedition cruise ship *Explorer*. She continued lecturing on cruises for a number of years and made a total of 15 trips to the Antarctic. She also made a trip to Spitzbergen with her husband Finn, daughter Karen, and nephew Jahn.

Jackie was a member of the Board of Governors of the American Polar Society, a fellow of The Explorers Club, a past president of the Society of Woman Geographers, and an honorary board member of the Antarctic Society. She was also active in other organizations including the National Society of Arts and Letters and ARCS. She will be missed by many people, but especially her family - daughter Karen Tupek, son-in-law Al Tupek, grandson Michael, and granddaughter Jaclyn.



Finn and Jackie with Kasco on Stonington Island



Jackie and Finn Skiing on Stonington Island

The funeral service and celebration of Jackie Ronne's life will be as follows:

Wednesday, June 24

**St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church
5450 Massachusetts Avenue
Bethesda, Maryland**

(Located at the entrance to Sumner, one mile outside the MD/DC line)

<http://www.stdunstansbethesda.org/> - for directions

5:00 - 6:30 p.m. Viewing/Wake/Family Visiting - if you want to stop by and say "hello" but can't make the funeral, which follows at:

6:30 p.m. Funeral Service and Celebration of Life - The service will be officiated by The Reverend Jeffery MacKnight with special music by friend and singer Mack Bailey (The Limelinters), whom my mother adored.

Cards or Flowers (after June 21) may be sent to:

The Tupek Family / Karen Ronne Tupek

6300 Wynkoop Blvd.

Bethesda, Maryland 20817

Or in lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to either:

The Finn and Edith Ronne Polar Exploration Award (already established but renamed)

c/o The Explorers Club

46 East 70th Street

New York, New York 10021

or

The Edith Ronne Fellowship Fund (which is established by her will)

c/o The Society of Woman Geographers

415 East Capitol Street SE

Washington, DC 20003

I endorse (and actually request) that various organizations and friends forward this email to their mailing lists.

Especially:

- The Society of Woman Geographers
- Explorers Club, Washington Group
- National Society of Arts and Letters, Washington Chapter
- The Antarctic Society
- The American Polar Society
- St. Dunstan's Church
- Ski Club of Washington, DC - Joani's List
- Folk Music Groups - not full listserve, but "regulars" or "board" lists, like Focus Music

The Feature Article Obituary in the Washington Post:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/06/17/AR2009061703502.html>

blog posting about it, with embedded video:

<http://voices.washingtonpost.com/postmortem/2009/06/ronne.html>

Other articles:

The San Francisco Chronicle:

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2009/06/19/BA44189FHA.DTL>

The Wall Street Journal:

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124546920980433709.html>

The Antarctic Sun:

<http://antarcticsun.usap.gov/features/contenthandler.cfm?id=1808>

And there's more on a site called TRIBUTES:

<http://www.tributes.com/show/Edith-Ronne-86156324>

I have created an extensive webpage about her, with photos, etc. It is at:

http://www.ronneantarcticexplorers.com/Edith_Jackie_Ronne.htm

Karen Ronne Tupek