



Elizabeth Pierson Friend with her self-portrait, "My Beasts and I: In Memory of My Father," which won a prize in 2002.

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Elizabeth Pierson Friend, 69, artist, poet, chef and teacher

Gayle Ronan Sims INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

Elizabeth Pierson Friend, 69, of Villanova, an artist, poet and superb chef, died July 18 of cardiac arrest after open-heart surgery at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania.

When she was a Smith College sophomore, one of her poems won second place in a student contest judged by W. H. Auden (Sylvia Plath won first prize). Mrs. Friend spent her junior year abroad at McGill University in Montreal and liked it so much she stayed until graduating in 1955 with a bachelor's degree in English. She then went to Thailand for an adventure, where she

taught English to classes totalling more than 200 students. She returned to America and earned a master's degree in English from Yale University in 1957.

In 1960 she married Theodore Friend, whom she had met when they were at Yale. Mrs. Friend taught English and Classical Greek history at primary schools in New Haven, Conn., the town of her birth, and Buffalo, N.Y., for several years until her children were born.

In 1972, her husband was elected president of Swarthmore College. Mrs. Friend was famous for her superb cooking and gracious entertaining at the president's house until 1982. She planned all of the meals and cooked most of them. She had help with the preparation when the guest list reached dozens or hundreds. While at Swarthmore, Mrs. Friend kept records of all of the couple's dinner

parties. She recorded the seating arrangements and menus so that when guests returned they would sit next to someone new and were never served the same meal twice.

"She cooked mostly French fare and had a great sense of being generous without wearing herself out. Her specialties, like ginger duck, potato gratin and almond cake, could all be made ahead, so that when guests came to dinner, she focused her attention on them, rather than on cooking," said her daughter-in-law, Amanda Hesser (who is married to son Tad), a food writer for the New York Times. Many of Elizabeth's recipes were printed in the Times.

After tending to the responsibilities at the president's house, Mrs. Friend became a trustee of the Shipley School for nine years. There she led the strategic planning to build its middle school.

A serious artist throughout her life, Mrs. Friend studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in the 1980s. She exhibited and sold her paintings (using her maiden name, Elizabeth Pierson) at art shows throughout the region. Her self-portrait, *My Beasts and I: In Memory of My Father*, won the Founders Prize at the Woodmere Art Museum in 2002. There were 435 entries from Delaware Valley artists in the contest that year.

Her husband, the author of four books including his most recent, *Indonesian Destinies*, is a senior fellow at Philadelphia's Foreign Policy Research Institute. During his tenure as head of the Eisenhower Fellowships from 1984 to 1996, Mrs. Friend traveled all over the world with him.

He retired to care for Mrs. Friend when she was diagnosed with advanced breast cancer in 1995. Mrs. Friend went through what her doctor called "oncological hell" after a mastectomy and grueling experimental treatments. After her recovery, she was so healthy and vivacious that "it was easy to forget she had been so sick," her husband said. "In radiantly good health, she played a great game of tennis and sometimes tolerated me as a doubles partner."

Recently, while in the hospital before surgery, Mrs. Friend flipped through the channels in search of her favorite show. When her son told her the hospital didn't have HBO, she said, "Well, how do they expect anyone to recover without *Sex and the City*?"

In addition to her husband and son Tad, Mrs. Friend is survived by another son, Pier; a daughter, Timmie; a grandson; and a brother.

Services were private. A memorial service will be held Oct. 25 at Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church.

Memorial donations may be sent to Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pa. 19081.

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