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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
OBITUARY

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May Morse, 94, founding board member of Greenport's Peconic Landing, trustee of Greenport's Brecknock Hall Foundation, past president of Shelter Island's Silver Beach Association, former trustee of Mashomack Preserve, past president of the Friends of the Shelter Island Public Library, past president of the Seraphic Society, long-time executive assistant to John T. Sargent, president and chairman of Doubleday & Company, Inc.

May Morse, retired executive assistant to the president and chairman of Doubleday & Company, publishers, and company insurance manager, died Saturday, peacefully at home in Peconic Landing, Greenport, New York, after a 1-year battle with lung cancer. May and her late husband, Ed, lived for many years in their Shelter Island home on Bayshore Drive.

Morse joined the accounting department of Doubleday & Company in 1941 after attending Queens College. At the time, Doubleday's main office was located in Garden City, New York. In 1964, Morse began working directly for John Sargent, Nelson Doubleday's brother-in-law, at Doubleday's Manhattan office. Sargent led the company through a "golden age" of publishing working with writers including President Dwight Eisenhower, Stephen King, Isaac Asimov, Michael Jackson, William F. Buckley Jr., Barbara Bush, and Leon Uris becoming the largest publisher in the world by 1977. Morse retired in 1986 from Doubleday following their acquisition by Bertelsmann, the largest media company in the world. Bertelsmann's merger team was surprised to discover that Morse, as a woman, managed all the corporate insurance policies for a \$500 million international company. Today, the combined United States firm is known as Random House.

In 1966, Morse was invited to join the Seraphic Society, a closely managed group of executive assistants linking the boardrooms of many Fortune 500 firms. After becoming the organization's president in 1972, Morse received many job offers including an invitation from the late Brooke Astor to manage her foundation. Declining the invitation, Morse continued her work for Doubleday and Mr. Sargent including receiving the first word-processor generated manuscript for Doubleday, *Strong Medicine* by Arthur Hailey in 1983, and suggesting a role in the firm for Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis later hired by Mr. Sargent as an editor.

She married her husband, Ed Morse, in 1949. In 1961, the Morses purchased a house on West Neck Creek, Shelter Island, after many years spending summers in Montauk. The Morses spent as much time as possible abroad, sailing in the Caribbean or skiing in the Alps. Morse was a former member of the Shelter Island Yacht Club and a long-time member of Gardiner's Bay Country Club, sponsored by Douglas M. Black, past Doubleday chairman and Ram Island resident.

In addition to her sister, JoMarie Colby (née Boylston), also of Peconic Landing, Mrs. Morse is survived by her nephew, John T. Colby Jr. and his wife, Betsy, of Shelter Island, niece Jacqueline Colby and her husband, Mark Muntzner, of New Jersey, a grand-nephew, John T. Colby III (Cole), and two grand-nieces, Kaitlyn Muntzner and Marnie Colby. In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to East End Hospice, [www.eeh.org](http://www.eeh.org).



(left to right, Brendan Gill, *The New Yorker Magazine*, Morse, John T. Sargent, 1974)

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