

## Phil's Biggest Fan: Bette Farmer

The saying goes, "behind every great man is a great woman." Behind the soft spoken and easy going Philip José Farmer there was always the fiery, effervescent, and fiercely loyal Bette Farmer.



Phil met Elizabeth Virginia Andre in 1940 while they were both attending Bradley Polytechnical Institute in Peoria. Their whirlwind romance, initiated by Phil twice throwing himself down a flight of stairs to get her attention, was interrupted in the winter semester when Phil transferred to Missouri, but he missed Bette so much he began hitchhiking 300 miles back to Peoria on the weekends. They were secretly married in Boonville, Missouri on May 10th, 1941. They remained happily married for over 67 years.

It was Bette who encouraged Phil to go back to college in 1949 to finish his degree and to keep writing. She worked as a medical technician through the early part of his career so he would have time to write and later on worked as his de facto business manager. She often traveled with him to science fiction conventions and together they were one of the most popular couples on the scene. Over the years Bette continued to play an active role in promoting Phil's career, most recently chronicling her life with Phil in the science fiction community in a series of essays for *Farmerphile*, and playing the gracious host to gatherings of fans coming from all over the world to celebrate their love of all things Farmerian.

Bette had been looking forward to and planning for FarmerCon IV ever since Phil's birthday party in January, and even before that since last year's FarmerCon. We're all sad she can't be here, the life of the party, with all the best stories and providing her usual abundance of cheer and warmth and hospitality.

For those who spent any time with the Farmers, be they members of the science fiction community, friends, or family, Bette's absence at FarmerCon will be felt as poignantly as Phil's.

