

Evansville Press Courier
Friday 5/27/1978 p. 17

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Two other vehicles also were

involved in the accident.

91608.

Bradford. He said firefighters

Evansville woman made name on Broadway, H

By Sara Anne Corrigan
Staff reporter

The quiet life which Niela G. Hartz had led on Evansville's West Side as wife, mother and grandmother was a counterpoint to a career that was dazzling by any standards.

The family has a scrapbook she kept, yellowed with age but thick with photographs, newspaper clippings, playbills and magazine ads that proclaim the beauty and talent of Niela Goodelle.

Mrs. Hartz, 77, whose maiden name and stage name was Goodelle, died yesterday at her home at 7321 Taylor Ave.

Niela Goodelle was in show

Niela
Hartz



business in the 1930s — that glitzy, fabulous time when Hollywood still flirted with its own innocence, making opulent films that looked like Broadway musicals... when names like Ziegfeld, Eddie Duchin, Al Jolson, Walter

Winchell and Buddy Rogers were household names across the nation, as well as Goodelle's friends and professional associates.

She was the girl who turned down the late Rudy Vallee's marriage proposal in 1937 because, the trade papers reported, she didn't believe he would ever be "the ideal mate."

Her life story is itself the stuff of movies.

A native of New York State, Mrs. Hartz was reared in Florida. She showed early promise as an entertainer, giving her first piano concert at age 6, her son, Tony Hartz of Newburgh, says.

Later, the family returned north where Mrs. Hartz, con-

vinced that show business was in her future, approached Burton Thatcher, a popular singer and teacher in the late 1920s, and arranged with him to trade vocal lessons — which she felt she needed — for her services as a piano accompanist. He accepted.

She later accompanied the tenor on tour, and one day, at a high society party in Florida, Thatcher asked her to sing.

She did. And just like in the movies, one of the guests at that party turned out to be an influential and well-heeled show business mogul from New York City who was so impressed with her talent that he sent her back to the city with a letter of introduction to his

theater friends there.

At the peak of a career that could have possibly lasted decades longer, she met F. Minton Hartz, of Evansville, after her show one night at a Miami Beach nightclub.

In 1940, she married "her doctor" and retired.

And for the most part, she did.

Active for many years in Evansville's Junior League, she was involved in several Junior League Follies — one of her last major performances for local audiences being in the 1964 production of "The Gaslight Follies," which the organization produced at the Bosse High School auditorium.

She raised three children, two

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of whom, Patty Hartz Remmert of Evansville, and Tony Hartz of Newburgh, survive her. Another son, Danny, Tony's twin brother, died in an automobile accident during his senior year in high school, Tony says.
Dr. Hartz died in 1982.
Surviving in addition to her children are two granddaughters, Laurie Mead of Indianapolis and Stacey Hartz of Newburgh.
Services will be at 10 a.m. tomorrow at Ziemer-Shears Funeral Home East Chapel, with entombment in St. Joseph Mausoleum.
Friends may call from 2 to 4 and 6 to 8 p.m. today at the funeral home.