



## Jean Muriel Larkin

August 15, 1925 - April 18, 2023

### 97 YEARS OF JEAN

On August 15, 1925, Jean Muriel Geyer was born at Beyer's Hospital in Ypsilanti, Michigan to Eldon Cleo and Rosena Myrtle McDougald Geyer, arriving on their

4th anniversary. Her parents were both teacher graduates from Eastern Michigan

Normal College; Eldon was finishing his Master's at the University of Michigan.

After his graduation, Eldon immediately took a teaching position with the Battle

Creek Public Schools so Jean was raised in the "Cereal Capital" at 119 Garrison

Street with her older brothers Donald and younger brother Carl, the stepping stones siblings barely a year apart. Some of Jean's fondest memories were playing in the front yard, the big porch with a swing, popcorn by the fireplace, singing along at the piano and her beautiful dressing table her Mother made out of orange crates.

During the Summer of 1930, while Eldon pursued his Doctorate at Columbia University, Jean and Don attended the Horace Mann School. There she learned

to read from Marjorie Mann, the leading children's primer writer of her time, thus skipping to first grade with Don. Despite her close brothers, Jean pursued the girly past times of playing with dolls, dressing up, rescuing stray cats, cooking, summer camping with the Camp Fire Girls, figure skating, writing, drawing and the performing arts. Eldon provided his children with continual varied real life experiences such as harvesting Michigan produce, building one of the first travel trailers on the road, constructing a backyard club house for imaginary play, and vacation trips highlighting such legendary characters as John Dillinger and Dr. John Harvey Kellogg.

In 1942, at the age of 16, Jean was presented with her Battle Creek's Central High School diploma from Eldon, then superintendent of schools. While pursuing a bachelor's degree in Speech Therapy at Michigan State College, Jean joined Sigma Kappa sorority and worked in the War Nursery and Post Cafeteria; both Don and Carl served in World War II. After graduating in 1946, Jean began her 30 year teaching career at Walnut Elementary School in Lansing, Michigan as a classroom teacher and speech therapist for physically impaired children.

In 1947, Jean married a MSC engineering student, Keith Feather, and their daughter Marcia arrived in March 1951. After their divorce in 1952, Jean and Marcia lived with her parents at 445 Highland Avenue in Lansing, Michigan while continuing to teach at Walnut School.

In the spring of 1956, Jean met her future husband, Richard V. "Dick" Larkin,

and the father to one of her students, Dennis, at the Walnut's Father's Day Tea.

While Den had repeatedly told his Dad that "you should meet my Speech Teacher", Jean's principal was playing Cupid on her side. It worked! On December

14, 1956, Jean and Dick were united in marriage in the Maple Rapids, Michigan

Methodist Church. That day she received from him the wedding gift of a "ready-made family" and "the brothers Marcia always wanted", five new sons: Duane, Don, Terry, Doug and of course, Den. All of their children attended them at the ceremony and their families were combined forever.

In the Fall 1957, Dick and Jean moved their family to Midland, Michigan.

While

Jean continued as a speech therapist on the elementary and secondary levels for

the Midland Public Schools, Dick became a sales representative in the Dow Chemical Company. Over the years, they welcomed daughters and sons in law

and grandchildren into the Larkin Family at their home at 300 Wilson Drive.

In 1973, they took a "trip of a life time" overseas, visiting Duane and Doug and their families, who were stationed in Germany.

Dick and Jean both happily retired in June 1977 and spent the year as gypsy travelers in their 30 foot Airstream before settling permanently again in September of 1978 in their "Little House on the Prairie" at 115 Rolling Hills Drive in Pueblo West. Retirement suited Jean well, pursuing active hobbies of sewing, swimming and keeping a daily journal. Dick and Jean continued enjoying Airstream traveling, camping and visiting family and friends nationwide. Dick also collaborated with Jean, making handcrafted wooden

frames for the 50 paintings that she created. They soon became active members

of the Ecumenical Church, with Jean serving in Children's Ministry and contributing her creative Lay Leading pieces in services for many years.

Jean is a life - long animal lover. As a young girl, she adopted very stray cats she found . And she raised four felines: Figaro, Fluffy, Dusty and Smokey with her children. After the family had all left, came the canine companions: first Daso and Herbie J , then Muffin and Cody. Jean still cared for other people's dogs as she would her own. It's no wonder that a good friend once remarked, "I want to come back as a Larkin Dog!" As long as she lived there, 115 E Rolling Hills Drive was the Chief Pet Sitter for her many "adopted" furry friends.

After Dick's passing on October 28, 2010, Jean continued to live her life to the fullest. She regularly visited her new made friends at "Dick's Mansion" bringing sunshine and conversation with her while stoically living alone in their Lancer. Jean faithfully drove herself to church and attended 3 family weddings, flying to San Antonio twice to be with family. She was everyone's Cheerleader and Baker. 100 Pueblo friends and relatives showered her with a lavish 90th Birthday Bash in August 2015. In 2012, Marcia warned Jean that since her Life Book was 2 volumes, Jean needed to "stop living so much" so they could publish it. It was but a 3rd volume could be made for the rest of Jean's Life. Jean told us that she "didn't do old", but was that "Tough Old Bird" that we didn't want to eat for Thanksgiving. And she never gave in to her Dementia. As being in her 90s took its toll, she cautioned us to " wait til you are 9 \_!" When we tried to hook her up with many an eligible bachelor, but Jean retorted like Joanna Woodward, "Not interested. I've had the best." Hopefully we all have learned from her example to never take for granted the finest things in life.

In Feb 2016 Jean was finally not physically capable of living alone. So she became the resident “Social Butterfly” of many Colorado Assisted Living places:

Bonaventure, Brookdale el Camino, Legend and The Lodge. Therapy Dogs, Bingo, Live Performances, Sing A Longs and Spiritual Gatherings filled her days.

Living there she could stay close to her daughter Marcia, son in law Bill Alexander, granddaughter Laura, great granddaughter Breanna and grandson in law Neil Hoffman. She continued to correspond by letter writing, cards, especially her beloved Christmas card letter, and emails until Dementia robbed

her of her writing gift. While Jean documented her life in journals and anecdotal

manuscripts, Marcia preserved them in the 50 + volume “Jean Larkin Library” Memory Book Collection that brought great joy to Jean towards the end of her life.

Jean believed in the Power of Positive Thinking. Her Dad had 2 signs that made a huge impression on her young mind: “It isn’t the hours you put in, but what you put in the hours.” And “Chop thine own wood, it will warm thee twice. But in her last years we heard Jean say, “Have Fun!” a lot. Jean’s ministry was to bring joy into all the lives of those she Encountered through Service. We are creating a “Golden Ambassadors of Happiness” Project, with Therapy Dogs in her honor.

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

JUN **24**. 10:00 AM (MT)

Pueblo West Funeral Home and Crematory  
381 S. Joe Martinez Blvd.  
Pueblo West, CO 81007  
(719) 547-5100  
<https://www.pueblowestfuneralhome.com>