



Marion Elizabeth Svendsen

November 21, 1916 - September 23, 2017

Marion Elizabeth Svendsen was born on November 21, 1916 to Arndt and Clara Hanson of Hutchinson, Minnesota. With her two brothers Clifford and Roger, she grew up on a dairy farm north of town and spoke mostly Danish, the language of her ancestors, until she was three. Her pride in her Danish heritage continued throughout her life. She was a good student and avid reader, another lifelong interest. After school in town, she would run down to the public library in the town square, grab a book, check it out, and run back in time to catch the school bus back to the farm.

She attended Dana College and Mankato State Teachers College during the depths of the Great Depression, a time when few went to college, especially girls. Her father borrowed money to make this possible, a tribute to her scholarly promise, and her father's belief in the value of education, even for girls.

She taught in Redwood Falls, Minnesota, living with her lifelong friend Carol Olesen (Petersen). She remembered especially one Sunday, when the roommates, listening to a Sunday symphony on the radio, heard the program interrupted to announce the attack on Pearl Harbor.

The country was at war, but on August 22, 1942, Marion married Ethan Svendsen, son of the Lutheran pastor, H.A. Svendsen and Mary (Krosgaard) Svendsen in Hutchinson. Their first child, Mark Tange, was born September 14, 1945 just as the war ended. Carol Marie followed on December 12, 1949 and the family lived in Terre Haute, Indiana, where Marion taught third grade for many years at Riley Elementary School. She loved teaching, and parents and her students have paid tribute to the difference she made in their lives.

She was an active member of Trinity Lutheran Church in Terre Haute, serving as Sunday School superintendent and pianist for church programs. Many children learned about Martin Luther and the Reformation from her talks each October.

Moving to Cedar Falls, Iowa in 1985, she became a member of St. Paul Lutheran where she served as secretary and proud member of the Quilters, piecing quilts for Lutheran World Relief. She participated in book and international studies groups through the American Association of University Women and was a member of the Cedar Valley Danes. She spent a few weeks each year volunteering at the Danish American Archives in Blair, Nebraska, cataloging letters and other documents from Danish immigrants to this

country. She traveled in Europe, Afghanistan, and the United States, and especially enjoyed summer vacations with beloved sisters-in-law Ruth Svendsen and Evelyn Svendsen. She loved visits from her children, Carol and Mark, and their spouses Jay and Dian, and her granddaughter Dayna. She treasured her times with her brother Roger, her sister-in-law Marilyn, and their four children, who visited her often. She humiliated many family members with her Scrabble prowess.

Marion was born four years before women had the right to vote, and in her last year she proudly voted for a woman for president. Throughout her 100-year lifespan, during which she saw many changes in her country, her community, and her life, she remained a steady and loving presence in the lives of her family and all who knew her.

MEMORIALS MAY BE DIRECTED TO:

The Danish American Archive and Library (1738 Washington St., Blair, NE 68008)

St. Paul Lutheran Church (2812 Willow Ln, Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613)

Events

SEP **Memorial Service** 11:00AM

30

St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church
2812 Willow Lane, Cedar Falls, IA, US, 50613

Comments



“ How fortunate we were to be next door neighbors to the Svendsens, Ethan, Marion, Carol, and Mark. I'm sure they influenced my parents in encouraging my brother and I to get college educations. I have a Black Hills Spruce tree which Ethan recommended and remember fondly when my mom, Muriel, and Marion offered each other support to get their ears pierced! What memories we could share about their lives well-lived!
Please accept my condolences,
Debra Kluesner Stringer

Debra Stringer - September 30, 2017 at 09:21 PM



“ We enjoyed knowing Marion and Ethan when they lived in Terre Haute, and remember with pleasure dinner parties with them in their gracious home. Our condolences to all Marion's family and friends. -Margaret and Peter Bruning

Margaret and Peter Bruning - September 30, 2017 at 04:21 PM