



Miriam Annette Berninger

January 1, 1930 - November 1, 2019

Memories of our mom Miriam ;
Dear family and friends,

It is with great sadness that we are writing to let you know that our Mom passed away peacefully in her sleep on November 1, 2019 in Sarasota, Florida. We hope you will enjoy these memories of her as much as we have loved having her as our Mom.

Miriam Annette Berninger was born on January 1st, 1930 to Lloyd Roosevelt and Mabel Pauline (McCurdy) Walker in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It was the midst of the depression and before all her parents' money ran out, they traveled to the western part of Pennsylvania to a small town named Curlsville where her mother had grown up on the family farm. Her parents traded hay with the neighboring farmer who raised dairy cattle in exchange for milk for their young daughter. After a few years, her parents moved to Lloyds' family in Sayre, PA and started a grocery store in the front of his parents' home. Mom helped sell ice cream treats from this store. Ren and Ida Walker were the only grandparents that our Mom knew and she cherished them. A highlight for our Mom was the pony June that a neighbor exchanged for food from the grocery store. Later, baby Junette was born and that added more excitement for our mom. In recalling this memory lately with our Mom, we had commented that she probably couldn't have ridden Junette, but Mom added that Junette did get bigger! Miriam had a much loved Chow Chow dog in her childhood she called "Son Sue" or Suzy. Her parents bought her a lovely wagon wheeled themed bedroom set the summer after her wrist surgery and it is still in the family, treasured by Jo Ann. From there, the family traveled every few years getting better jobs along the way until they finally landed in Drayton Plains, Michigan where Mom went to high school.

Although our Mom wanted to go to New York City to study fashion design, her parents wanted her to go to Michigan College, now Michigan State University. There, Mom was initially placed in temporary housing with lots of beds in a huge room. This may seem like an awful experience, but to our Mom, an only child, it was truly wonderful as she was with

many girls who became like sisters to her. Initially, Mom started taking home economics, but was told there was not a fashion design program for her to study. She later changed her studies and earned a degree in elementary education. Along the way, she joined the Alpha Gamma Delta sorority and once again lived with many girls having a most wonderful time. It was at college that our Mom met our Dad on a blind date at a fraternity-sorority dance.

Following graduation in 1950, Mom visited Dad in New York City, taking him away from his summer job. We are guessing that our Dad's parents were not thrilled with this idea. Mom taught elementary school near her parents' home the next year and then married our Dad the following summer on June 9, 1951. They enjoyed an extended honeymoon camping in the Blue Ridge Mountains while waiting for Dad to be called to serve in the Korean War. Fortunately, Dad stayed in the States being based at the Marine camp in Quantico, Virginia. Mom continued teaching for the couple of years while they were there. Following his military service, they returned to Michigan State where Dad earned his master's degree. Eventually they settled in Madison, Wisconsin, where their four kids were born and raised.

A fun memory for us kids was hearing about how Mom won all the furniture in our house on the Price is Right show. It was 1960 and Bill Cullens was the host of the popular game show that was then televised in New York City. Our best guess is that the family travelled to NYC around Thanksgiving to be with our paternal grandparents. Mom wore her pink elbow length gloves because at that time people in the audience raised their hands in hopes of being chosen for the show. Luckily for her, the lady with the pink gloves was chosen to be on the show and then won the grand prize of an Ethan Allen living room set.

In the 1970's, Mom went back to school and became a licensed practical nurse, initially working in a hospital and later working for the Women's and Infants program (WIC) and doing home health care. While working for the WIC program, Mom used her artistic talents to illustrate their monthly newsletter. In 1972, Miriam had many late nights illustrating Flower Arranging, a book that she published with Lou. It seems that whatever Mom did, her artistic talents were well used.

Mom very much enjoyed raising her children. She was a Girl Scout leader for many years and we have happy memories of camping at Camp Brandenburg and going on bike trips around Madison. She involved the kids in making the handmade Christmas cards she designed each year and she continued designing cards well into her 80's. Another fond holiday memory was inviting the neighborhood kids to eat a homemade gingerbread house, after watching us put on a puppet show and singing Christmas carols. When we

were little, she decorated our strollers and little bikes for the 4th of July local parade. Mom was active with bridge clubs, Covenant Presbyterian Church, the Unitarian Church, the horticulture wives club, and the Midvale association babysitting exchange. During summers, we camped at various state parks near Madison with our dog Skippy and our Mom during the week. Dad worked during the week and traveled to be with us on the weekends. Our family also took road trips several summers camping around the United States and Canada. Prior to leaving Wisconsin, Mom also went on several trips with Dad helping to host garden tours in Europe. When Doug and Jo Ann were in college, Mom & Dad also drove many times to their rowing competitions around the country.

Although Mom's birthday was on January first, many birthdays were spent at a local fabric store that had a fantastic sale every year on New Year's Day. Mom was an accomplished sewer and made many of our Halloween costumes, dance recital outfits, school clothes, beach moo moo's and many other items.

Mom learned to love doing crafts from watching her Mom, Dad, Aunts, and Grandma who all enjoyed doing a variety of crafts. Mom became accomplished at doing crochet and knitting. She learned how to do needle lace and then took things to the next level when she designed and made an outer-space scene with various planets using a variety of needle lace designs. This then hung in their bedroom for many years. She also taught the kids to macramé, and created plant hangers, which she sold at art shows. Throughout her life, mom loved to make jewelry, especially beaded necklaces, which she coordinated with her clothing. She was very fond of unique rings and enjoyed visiting rock shops, which was probably sparked from her parents who tumbled stones and created jewelry.

Mom's artistic nature took her many places and one of them was in architecture. Their first home in Madison was a small 3-bedroom home. Mom won a design contest and with that money our folks were able to put on a small addition that added a dining room and laundry with a half bathroom to the home. Later mom designed a second addition that added 2 upstairs bedrooms and a bath, a family room and a garage. Mom was instrumental in designing a stone patio in the backyard; it was a lot of hard work! After inheriting her cousin Dorothy's home on Cape Cod, Mom once again designed a series of additions to that home so that they could better enjoy having family and friends visit them in the home she named "Walker's Landing". She designed and spent countless hours making a handmade braided rug for the Cape Cod living room. Following our Dad's retirement from the UW, Mom and Dad moved to Florida to begin a second career for our Dad. Yes, Mom designed a home for them where they lived for the next 30 plus years.

Mom enjoyed many activities in retirement in Florida. When they first moved to Florida,

Mom volunteered with Meals on Wheels delivering food to people's homes in the community. She was a very active member of the Sho Fu Bonsai Society of Sarasota for approximately 30 years, including being its President. Sho Fu sponsors a bonsai exhibit today at Selby Gardens, a favorite place of Mom's. Additionally, she was President of the state Bonsai Society in Florida and was involved with many state conventions, even chairing one of the International Conventions in Orlando. She used her artistic skills to design fliers for club events, a bumper sticker and a comic book on bonsai. Her collection of bonsai grew over the years, which presented a challenge in their yearly travels. Miriam attended an international convention in Japan and visited a renowned private collection of bonsai in Asia. She was also involved with a herb club, the WI alumni association of Florida and served as president of her sorority's local chapter.

Mom and Dad had a very happy retirement and enjoyed being able to travel back and forth by car between Florida, Cape Cod, and Wisconsin. They particularly enjoyed spring time in the Cape and made new friends there. Friends and family were very important to Mom and Dad, so they kept in touch with neighbors and UW friends and our Dad's cousins' families, who they would see on their fall visits. They continued to be avid fans of the Badgers football and hockey, with season tickets for many years, enjoying tailgating parties. For their 50th wedding anniversary, the family traveled to Williamsburg where we all wore matching T-shirts designed by Mom. In one of the tours, someone asked why we were all dressed alike and upon hearing the reason, asked Mom and Dad to do a dance! About eight years ago Mom and Dad became doggie parents to Bittsey Boy who they adored. He must have known from an early age that it was best to sleep in until his parents woke up!

Because of all the travel that Mom and Dad did, they were able to enjoy grandchildren that lived in Florida, Minnesota and New York! There were many special times spent together exploring Cape Cod, having fun at water parks in Wisconsin and of course having family & friends visit them in Florida. A happy memory for Mary Lou was when Mom traveled to China with her to adopt Amy Li.

Miriam is survived by her four children: Mary Lou, Linda, Jo Ann and Doug; her grandchildren: Amy Li, Mia Xing, Brandon, Kristy, Julie, Josh, and Louisa; and her great grandchildren: Matt, Ben, Micah, Kaden, Tyler, and soon to be new baby Cora.

Mom had a creative, independent soul. But if only one word could be used to describe our Mom, it would be that she was artistic!

With love from Doug, Jo Ann, Linda and Mary Lou

Photos can be viewed on SkywayMemorial.com.

Memorials may be directed to Selby Gardens in Sarasota or the Sho Fu Bonsai Society of Sarasota.

Comments



“ 28 files added to the album Memories of Miriam



Jo Ann - November 24, 2019 at 07:22 PM



“ 66 files added to the album Memories of Miriam



Jo Ann - November 21, 2019 at 11:30 AM



“ 20 files added to the album Memories of Miriam



Linda Sullivan - November 10, 2019 at 05:03 PM



“ Hello to Mary Lou, Linda. JoAnn, and Doug,

Dave and I have many happy memories of your mother from the days we lived together on Charles Lane in Madison and visiting at the water parks, and the visit to Cape Cod, and our time at our cottage in northern Wisconsin. We saw them several times in Bradenton. The latest about a year ago. Our daughter, Ann Rhodes lives an hour or two away in Hudson. She was a wonderful friend to have.

Vel and Dave Geraldson
222 Park Place. #384
Waukesha, Wisconsin.

Vel Geraldson - November 08, 2019 at 12:52 PM



“ 10 files added to the album Memories of Miriam



Linda Sullivan - November 07, 2019 at 07:32 PM



“ 126 files added to the album Memories of Miriam



Jo Ann Heinrich - November 07, 2019 at 04:22 PM



“ 122 files added to the album Memories of Miriam



Jo Ann Heinrich - November 07, 2019 at 01:36 PM