



Martha Frances Lear Larson

February 22, 1936 - January 28, 2023

Martha L. Larson, age 86, died peacefully at home on January 28, 2023, of congestive heart failure. Martha Frances Lear was born on February 22, 1936, in Story City, Iowa. She was the third of four daughters born to E. Raymond Lear and Frances Maynard Lear. Arriving on President Washington's birthday, they were hoping for a George but got a Martha. The family moved to Webster City, Iowa, a rural farming community, when her dad, known as "Rap" Lear, was elected sheriff of Hamilton County. He was the sheriff for 34 years and Martha was proud that he was the senior sheriff in the entire state of Iowa when he retired. Martha graduated as valedictorian from Lincoln High School in Webster City in 1954. She attended the University of Iowa where she was a member of the Pi Beta Phi sorority. She graduated in 1958 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education. After teaching school in California for two years, she returned to the University of Iowa where she taught second grade at the University Lab School in Iowa City while she pursued her Master's Degree in Education.

In 1961, Marty met John Larson, a first-year law student who had recently returned from the Navy. It was love at first sight. They were engaged after dating only three months and were married on April 14, 1962. They were married for 60 "blissful" years, as she liked to say. A son, Eric Lear Larson, was born in 1963, while they were still in school. Upon their respective graduations in 1964, they moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota, where John

practiced with a big law firm. Daughter Jennifer Gail Larson was born in 1965 in Minneapolis. After returning to Iowa City in 1967 for a few years, they moved to Tallahassee, Florida, in 1972 when John joined the faculty at Florida State University law school. They lived happily in Tallahassee for the next fifty years, although for Marty “home“ was always Iowa.

Marty and John were long-time members of St. John's Episcopal Church where they became staunch “eight-o'clockers.” For many years she served on Alter Guild, volunteered at the Lively Cafe, and helped count money on Mondays. She also trained as a Stephen Minister, co-chaired the St. John's Market one year, and was a member and past president of St. Mary's Circle. She also helped with the Christmas clothing drive at Grace Mission, served meals to the homeless as a part of St. John's team at the Kearney Center, and helped pack school meals for the A Full Summer project.

Marty enjoyed being a stay-at-home mom but also used her teaching experience by volunteering and tutoring at Timberlane School. Education was very important to her. She was a member of P.E.O. and of Chapter CL in Tallahassee, where she served in several offices including president. P.E.O. is an international philanthropic women's organization that has encouraged and supported women's education, including numerous scholarships, for over 150 years. Her mother (also a teacher) was a member, and Marty was recently recognized for her 67 years in the sisterhood, the most in Tallahassee. P.E.O. was near and dear to Marty, and she loved her P.E.O. sisters.

Marty also enjoyed doing volunteer work. She (and John after his retirement) regularly delivered Meals on Wheels and she was recognized for her 30 years of service by Elder Care Services. Marty was an ardent supporter of Planned Parenthood and actively served on the local board in its formative years. She also supported the arts and served a term on the board at LeMoyne Arts.

Socially, Marty enjoyed reading, bridge, tennis and investing. She was a

member of the Last Word Book Club, several bridge clubs, and Bulls and Bears Investment Club. She and John were charter members of Forestmeadows Tennis Club where they played many hours of mixed doubles with friends and later family tennis with Eric and Jennifer. In her early days, Marty participated in the South Georgia/North Florida Tennis League. When a double knee replacement curtailed her tennis, Marty turned to water aerobics with the Mermaids at Premier. One day granddaughter Abby at age two went to watch MyNana and was distraught to learn the Mermaids didn't have tails!

Marty loved to travel, and she was very proud of the fact that she had visited all fifty states, as well as most of Canada. She and John spent two summers in Oxford, England, where he was teaching in FSU's summer program. They also enjoyed many wonderful trips including France, Germany, Switzerland, Norway (her heritage), Sweden (his), Eastern Europe, Russia and China, as well as Mexico and Barbados.

Martha leaves behind her husband, John, and her two children, Eric (and wife Lisa) and Jennifer (and former husband Greg Birkmeier) and grandchildren Abigail Larson Birkmeier, Bradley Gregory Birkmeier and Ivan Lear Larson, all of Tallahassee. Abby is a junior in Engineering at Georgia Institute of Technology; Brad is a freshman at Florida State University; and Ivan is a freshman at Northwestern University. Marty never tired of telling all of her friends – repeatedly – how truly outstanding and talented all of her grandchildren were and how proud she was of each of them. She is also survived by sisters Chris Bening of Des Moines, Iowa, and Linda Fincham of Iowa City, Iowa, and sister-in-law Lori Butler, of Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin, as well as numerous cousins, nieces and nephews.

Marty's funeral will be held at St. John's Episcopal Church on Wednesday, February 8, 2023, at 3:00 pm with a reception to follow in Alfriend Hall. In lieu

of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Meals on Wheels at Elder Care Services, Big Bend Hospice, or St. John's Episcopal Church. The family would also like to thank Big Bend Hospice and the Visiting Angels for their loving care and assistance during Marty's last difficult months.

Breanna Green of Bevis Funeral Home (850-385-2193 or www.bevisfh.com) is assisting the family with their arrangements.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

FEB 8. 3:00 PM (ET)

St. John's Episcopal Church
211 North Monroe St.
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Tribute Wall

BC

“ *Barbara S Withers CPA purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Martha Frances Lear Larson.*



Barbara S Withers CPA - February 06, 2023 at 04:48 PM