



Betty Montana McCauley

April 11, 1927 - January 4, 2023

Betty McCauley died in Corvallis on January 4, 2023, with her daughters by her side. She was 95. She and her husband Jim had been active in the Corvallis community since 1951, where Betty later became involved with the library and with Grace Center for Adult Day Services. Betty was a poet and writer who taught the “Write Your Life Story” class at LBCC until she was in her nineties.

Betty Montana Pearson was born in Butte, Montana, on April 11, 1927, to Agnes Henning Pearson and John E. Pearson, both Swedish immigrants. Betty’s brother John was born three years later.

The family ran a small store in Silver Bow, Montana, until the Depression, when Agnes’s parents sent them one-way tickets to Sweden. From 1933 to 1935, the family lived in Stockholm, where Betty and Johnny attended school, learned Swedish, and played with cousins, many of whom remained lifelong friends. But after two years, they returned to the US and Butte.

Betty attended McKinley School and Butte High School, where she played the bassoon and Scotch drum and worked on the yearbook. Some of her poems won national contests. The Class of 1945 was the only class to be in high school during all four years of World War II.

In 1945, Betty started college at the University of Washington, where she majored in Sociology but took poetry from Theodore Roethke. At first, the students were mostly women. However, everything changed when the men came back from the military that winter. Betty met Jim McCauley through the student co-op, and they married in Butte in 1949.

Betty and Jim spent their first summer in a tent at Friday Harbor on San Juan Island, where Jim was a teaching assistant at the marine labs. That fall, Jim started teaching biology at Olympic Junior College in Bremerton. To pay for their first child, Betty learned to drive so she could help take the 1950 census. Daughter Jane was born at the end of 1950.

The next spring, Jim and Betty moved to Corvallis, where Jim started a PhD in Zoology. Daughter Mary was born in 1954, and the family moved to Costa Mesa, California, where Jim taught at Orange Coast Junior College for two years. Meanwhile, Betty started writing children's stories, which she shared with the many preschoolers on the block.

In 1956, son Tom was born, and the family moved again – back to Corvallis, where Jim worked as a post-doc in the Zoology Department. Betty, meanwhile, was raising a family and publishing stories in children's magazines. She also took writing classes from Bernard Malamud.

In 1960, Jim was offered a position at the Parasitology Lab at Montana State College, and the family moved to Bozeman. That year, they explored Montana – a home-coming for Betty – and made many new friends. But when political conflicts led to reduced funding for the college, Jim was excited to return to Corvallis once again and join the new Department of Oceanography at Oregon State.

Betty and Jim and their children were active in community affairs. They were

avid folk dancers, they attended Grace Lutheran Church, they enjoyed concerts and plays, and Betty led Brownie and Girl Scout troops. She helped lead campaigns for two expansions of the library, which inspired her to earn a Master of Library Science degree at the University of Oregon. She became the librarian for the Environmental Protection Agency in 1969.

Betty and Jim were very involved with their children's lives, often driving a station wagon full of kids to folk dance festivals or hiking trailheads. They encouraged Tom's basement bands and went to all his concerts. Summers always involved camping trips. Later, they visited Jane and her then-husband Duncan in Britain and Cameroon.

After Jim's sudden death in 1978, Betty was on her own, yet she remained active, enjoying Audubon and ARTrageous and Road Scholar trips. And she traveled alone to visit relatives in Sweden and to see Jane and Duncan and their daughters in England and West Africa.

Betty loved having her four grandchildren nearby. When Mary and her husband Dave Bucy traveled to Hawaii or Alaska for work trips, Betty came along to entertain their two boys. Later, she would visit Tom's music studios in Los Angeles or watch Jane teach English classes in central California.

Betty was proud to have helped create the Grace Center for Adult Day Services, recently named as the top adult day services provider in the country. She remained on the boards of Grace Center and the Library Foundation for the rest of her life, writing regular columns for each. She was also active in Audubon and in local writing and reading groups.

Recently, Betty's daughters helped her assemble forty years of writing to form her memoir, "Family in Three Centuries." Copies arrived just in time for Betty

to share them with grandchildren the week before she died.

Betty is survived by her three children, Jane Thomas, Mary Bucy (Dave), and Tom McCauley. Additional survivors include her four grandchildren and their spouses – Rhiannon Cochrane (Deverton), Kyle Bucy (Randi), Brendan Bucy (Roz), and Emily Lynn (Amy) – as well as six great-grandchildren (Max, Leo, Francis, James, Henry, and Phoebe), plus two nephews, Karl and Ted Pearson. She was preceded in death by her husband Jim, her parents, and her brother John.

A Celebration of Life will be held at Grace Lutheran Church in Corvallis at 1 PM, Saturday, March 11th, 2023. In lieu of flowers, donations in Betty's honor can be made to Grace Center, the Corvallis Library Foundation, or the Corvallis Audubon Society. The family would like to thank Timberhill Place for the loving care that Betty received during her final months.

Tribute Wall

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“ 4 files added to the tribute wall



MaryBeth Pearson - January 20, 2023 at 05:52 PM

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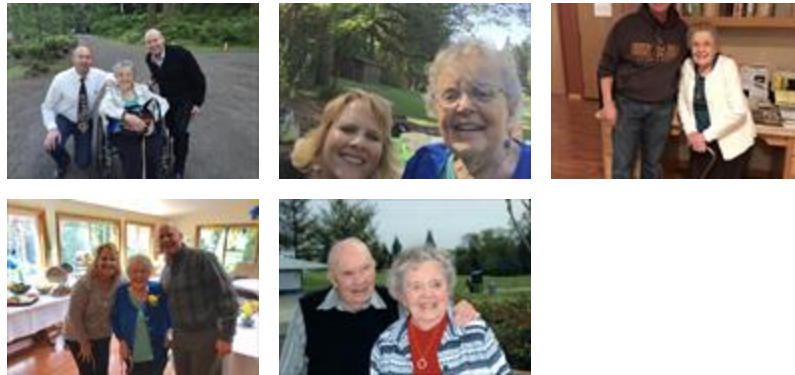
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MaryBeth Pearson - January 20, 2023 at 05:48 PM

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MaryBeth Pearson - January 20, 2023 at 05:45 PM

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Jane Thomas - January 20, 2023 at 05:20 PM