



Jean Adams

November 16, 1924 - August 22, 2012

Jean Marie Ritchie Adams, 87, of Corvallis died Aug. 22.

She was born in Trenton, N.J., to Franklin and Elizabeth Ritchie. The youngest of three, she is survived by her sister, Elspeth. Her brother, Fenwick, passed away in the '90s.

A young woman with strong spiritual values and a love of all living things, Jean grew up during World War II and was not certain of what career to choose. She attended Rutgers and then transferred to the University of Maine in Orono, where she chose to study animal husbandry.

While attending university she met Holyoke "Hokie" Adams, who was studying animal science. When they married on Aug. 16, 1947, they moved to Madison, Wis., where Hokie completed his doctorate in dairy science. Margaret "Peggy" was born the next year. They soon moved to Ellington, Conn., where Jean made many friends and was devoted to her family and church. In 1951, Douglas was born, adding to Jean's nest, and then Sarah came along in 1954.

Each child was important to her and she never played favorites. They moved to Tolland, Conn., and in 1956 Malcolm was born, followed by Thomas in 1959 and Janet in 1961. Jean was a busy mother, feeding and clothing her family, making certain all her children were healthy and loved, as well as teaching them essential values. Always an animal lover, they were never without a cat and dog.

Jean found time for friends, many with young children of their own. There were often long discussions around the kitchen table with friends, neighbors and family.

During all this time she supported Hokie in his career. In 1965 the family packed up and moved to Reno, where Hokie worked at the University of Nevada. This was a huge change for Jean and she faced the challenge by making new connections with neighbors and becoming active in the Reno Federated Church.

As the world began to change and war and social injustice raised their ugly heads, Jean fought the battle within and without to bring the world to a place of peace and happiness. It was a difficult time and she often struggled with her inability to help the needy and fix the world as well as watch her children grow into young adults with their egocentric needs. As time went by and her children began to leave the nest, she questioned her value and her contributions to the world.

Another move came, this time to Corvallis, which was a great environment for Jean. She became active at the First Congregational United Church of Christ as well as establishing herself in the neighborhood. She was busy and happy. Children grew and left but always returned to her loving home.

Needing to expand her knowledge, she registered with a program for a master's degree in values through the San Francisco Theological Seminary, taught at Oregon State University. She read, wrote and enjoyed the philosophical and theological dialog. She worked as a secretary for the Campus Christian Program at OSU for a short time.

She was a voracious reader, sometimes reading more than one book at a time: mysteries, theology, nonfiction, fantasy — all were fun for her. She also took up weaving and was a whiz at making beautiful place mats as well as fabric with wonderful patterns. Music was always in the background of her life — all types, including the newest music for youth. Time passed and Jean continued her support role for family and friends. She excitedly welcomed grandchildren and, recently, great-grandchildren.

A few years ago, Jean and Hokie downsized and moved to a smaller home. As they were in their 80s, medical problems began to arise and when Jean broke her hip they moved into the Corvallis Caring Place. Right away they made friends and she loved the interaction with the young people on staff.

As Hokie's health deteriorated, Jean stayed close by as she had been for 64 years of marriage. When Hokie died in September 2011, she began a new chapter in her life. She worked jigsaw puzzles with residents and staff, and looked forward to family visits and outings. Unfortunately, in June she fell and was critically injured, but because of her determination to return home she began the long road to recovery.

A second fall set her back and after rehab she temporarily moved to her daughter's home in Redmond. All was well until suddenly she developed pneumonia and died with family by her side. Jean is remembered for her warmth, unfailing compassion and nonjudgmental acceptance of family and friends. Her life goal was to make the world a better place.

Jean is survived by her sister, Elspeth Ross; children and spouses Peggy and Ward, Doug and Patty, Sarah and Bill, Tom and Erin, and Janet and Keith; grandchildren, Katie, Jason, Mary, Chris, David, Liz, Sarah, Kenzie, Kenneth, Philip, Robert and Hilary; and great-grandchildren, Hazel and Lyla.

A celebration of life service will take place at 3 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 22, at the First Congregational United Church of Christ, 4515 S.W. West Hills Road in Corvallis.

Jean supported many programs to improve peoples' lives, among them Habitat for Humanity, the Nature Conservancy, the Carter Center, Heifer Project International, the Southern Poverty Law Center and others.

Contributions in her memory can be made to any of these organizations or one of your choosing.