



Lydia A. Zinn

November 14, 1937 - August 22, 2024

With profound love and sadness, her family shares the news of the passing of Lydia Ann Zinn of Corvallis on August 22, 2024. She was 86.

Born in Missouri before her family moved out west, Lydia witnessed incredible changes in the world, and never lost interest in it. She grew up in Klamath Falls, OR, as the daughter of Lilith and James Tetrick, alongside two brothers: Todd and Herman. She graduated high school in Klamath, and then went on to get her teaching degree from Southern Oregon State University. She met her husband of 64 years, Tom Zinn, at a boat dock on Klamath Lake when she was out with another guy. They hit it off, began dating and eventually married in 1960. They began their life together, along with her Oregon teaching career at Fairhaven School, in Klamath Falls and then moved to St. Helens, where she worked at John Gumm Elementary. They then moved to Condon, then The Dalles, where she taught at Colonel Wright Elementary and finally to Corvallis, where she was a teacher for many years at Lincoln School. Lydia was a devoted teacher. Specializing in second grade for most of her career, she encouraged her students' strengths, helped them conquer their challenges, and recognized that before learning, basic needs such as food, safety and clothing must be met, and helped with those as she could. They had two sons, John and Jim, and the family's journeys including spending five years in Ankara, Turkey and the Middle East in the '70s. Their five-year stint in Turkey, where Tom was working for the U.S. Agency for International Development under a contract from Oregon State University in

the agriculture field, fed Lydia's love of archaeology and the lessons society can learn from it. Lydia's dream of being a female archeologist at a time when they were very rare turned into a lifelong passion for the great archaeological discoveries of the world, as well as an interest in the stories of women from places and situations that simply were not shared. Her overseas travel allowed her, to a degree, to pursue her interest in archaeology. She was a voracious reader of fiction and nonfiction stories of all kinds.

Lydia was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in the early 1980's and though there were relapses, she suffered with it throughout the rest of her life. She fought all that pain and loss with an inordinate amount of strength and grace, assisting others coping with the disease. She never lost her curious mind or sense of humor.

Lydia is survived by her husband, Tom Zinn; sons, John and Jim Zinn; family members, Christy Simpson and Marc Louie; cherished in-laws; cousins far and wide; caregivers who became part of the family; and hundreds of students that she taught at Lincoln and elsewhere. She was smart, kind, curious and had a sly sense of humor that could really sneak up on you.

Oh, and the bears: Lydia's impressive collection of teddy bears was familiar to family and friends and grew over the years. Teddy bears were traditionally given during celebrations of good times or for comfort in difficult times. They were thought to protect children as they sleep, so it just makes sense: she knew what she was doing. She was loved, will be dearly missed and is forever in our hearts.

A celebration of Lydia's life will take place in Corvallis in early October.

Donations in her memory may be made to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society at www.nationalmssociety.org.