



Marnie Ross

August 30, 1924 - May 6, 2011

Marnie Ross, 86, of Corvallis died Friday.

Marnie was born Florence Marion Benson in Redcliff, Alberta, Canada. Her father, John Percie Benson, was born in Quebec. Her mother, Jennie Grace McKim, was born in Deloraine, Manitoba. Her ancestors were British loyalists who moved from the colonies to Canada during the American Revolutionary War; one ancestor founded Switzerville, Ontario. Marnie and her older sister, Joyce, grew up in Vancouver, British Columbia.

In 1946 Marnie married Robert William Leber of Philadelphia, Pa. They moved to California, eventually living in Ukiah, Mendocino County. Marnie opened a knitting shop there, which she closed after the birth of her daughter, Harriett Mckim in 1955. In 1959, she became a United States citizen, and in 1968 the family moved to Corvallis. She and Bob divorced in 1972. In 1983 she married Jackson Ross.

Marnie was an artist in many media, but focused on watercolor. She was a member of the Watercolor Society of Oregon, and was a recipient of its Merit Award with Silver Pin. She was also a member of the Corvallis Arts Center and the Corvallis Art Guild. In 1979 she won 10th place in a national contest, "1979 Artists in Watercolor," sponsored by Inveresk Paper Company. Her work was accepted by national jurors in many WSO shows. Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center, and local homes and offices are graced by some of her paintings.

In addition to studying art and other subjects at Oregon State University at

Linn-Benton Community College, she taught drawing at the Corvallis Arts Center and LBCC. Between 1981 and 2007, she acted as curator for 192 art exhibits at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Corvallis, of which she was a member. This has given many local artists an opportunity to display their work in a beautiful, large gallery space. She was nominated for “Patron of the Arts” in 2008. In the last 10 years she turned her talents to quilting, with striking results. Her colorful garden and delicious cooking also showcased her artistic gifts.

Marnie was diagnosed with gall bladder cancer in March, 2011, and in mid-April went into hospice to be cared for by her husband, Jack, and daughter Harriett Smith of Eugene, at home.

She is survived by her daughter and husband; stepdaughters Susan McNutt, Peggy Mullett and Dayana Patterson; seven grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; niece Maureen MacDonald of Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada; and nephew Ken MacDonald of Toronto, Canada.

The family would like to express its gratitude to Benton Hospice Service for their caring help during her last weeks. At Marnie’s express request, no service will be held.

Memorial donations may be made to Benton Hospice Service or an arts group or charity of your choice.

Tribute Wall

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“ *Marnie was my neighbor in Corvallis. I have two of her paintings - one of which is her painting of my calla lillies.* ”

Cornelia Talley - February 17 at 12:39 PM