



## Carol A. Strazer

November 13, 2024

Carol Ann (Johnson) Strazer of Eaton, Colorado passed away peacefully on November 13th, 2024 at the age of 84 from complications related to Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS)/Lou Gehrig's Disease. She is profoundly missed by her loving family and the many friends whose lives she touched.

She was born on June 16, 1940 to Alice L. Mathison Johnson and Harold B. Johnson in Chicago, Illinois. Her fondest early childhood memories were with her cousins playing and roaming their family's old dairy farms settled by her maternal great, great grandparents near Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.

By age 8, Carol, her young twin sisters, Susan and Sandra, and parents moved to the small town of Sycamore, Illinois where her Johnson grandparents lived. She played clarinet in the marching band and graduated from Sycamore High School in 1958. She then enrolled at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. She was a member of the Zeta Tau Alpha sorority and graduated in 1962 with a B.S. degree in Speech/English Education. It was there that she met her husband, Bob Strazer. She converted to Catholicism and married on August 11, 1962.

They moved to South Bend, Indiana where she taught English and journalism and Bob completed his Master's degree at the University of Notre Dame. Their first daughter, Michelle Anne was born there. In 1965 they packed up

their little red Volkswagen Bug and migrated to the Pacific Northwest.

They first lived in Seattle. Then bought a home in Kirkland where their second daughter, Marcy Alice was born in 1967. Carol, Bob and their young, active family embraced the abundant natural splendor and outdoor recreation in the nearby Cascade mountains and Washington coast. They took backpacking trips into remote areas of Montana and spent weekends and summers hiking and camping. They taught their daughters to ski on the nearby mountain passes, often night skiing after Bob's work. Carol's confidence and joy of the outdoors blossomed in those Seattle/Kirkland years living in their first real house with a big backyard and a panoramic view of the Cascade Mountains.

In 1974, they moved to Lake Oswego, Oregon with Bob's company transfer. They would spend the next 30 years in Oregon where their youngest daughter, Mary Jean, was born in 1978. While juggling a young family, Carol managed to complete her Master's degree in Counseling Psychology at Lewis and Clark College in Portland in 1982. Her education, compassion and Catholic faith led her to found a Displaced Homemaker's program at Portland Community College for women transitioning from abusive relationships to productive lives and careers. She went on to have a fulfilling career as the Community Health Education Coordinator at Willamette Falls Hospital in Oregon City for 12 years until her retirement in 2002.

She and Bob then embarked on their great retirement adventure. They took their very first overseas trip to Mali, Africa to visit their daughter, Mary Jean, a Peace Corps Volunteer. They traveled in a primitive boat down the Niger River to Timbuktu, rode camels, camped in the Sahara Desert and were welcomed in the small villages where Mary Jean lived and worked. They took another dream trip to New Zealand and Fiji.

They were true nomads for a year as they traveled the country in their trusty

22' Arctic Fox trailer and truck. They loved the freedom and adventure of meeting new people and visiting family and friends all over the west and midwest. In 2004, they settled in the mountain community of Crystal Lakes, Colorado where they bought their dream log cabin home on five acres perched high on a ridge with a view towards Rocky Mountain National Park. They continued to log many miles and spent 950 nights camping out in their trailer.

Realizing a lifelong dream, Carol launched her next career as a freelance writer and editor. She wrote and self-published the historical fiction novel *Barbed Wire and Daisies* and a compilation of her stories and poems in *Mountain Smiles and Tears*. Carol edited *Mountain Reflections: A Collection of Red Feather Writers' Stories and Poems* which won first place in the Colorado Independent Publishers Association book awards. She published stories in *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series and her articles and essays appeared in *Woman's Day*, *The Power of Living*, *Christian Living in the Mature Years*, and other regional publications. Carol organized and led the Red Feather Lakes Writer's Group where she loved to encourage and promote other local authors. For a few years she was also editor and publisher of the *Wapiti Bugle* local newsletter in Crystal Lakes.

She recently said "her best years" were spent in the high country southwest of Fort Collins. Her idyllic writing life was complimented with a steady diet of outdoor adventures. She loved to kayak on Panhandle Reservoir, hike and cross country ski with friends on local trails and accompany Bob to remote fly fishing locales. She cherished visits with her daughters, seven grandchildren and her many other friends and family to their cozy mountain cabin. Carol loved to observe the prolific wildlife and birds all around them.

She and Bob actively supported their Red Feather Lakes summer-time

Church of Our Lady of the Lakes through service as Eucharistic Ministers, Church cleaning in preparation and enjoying the fellowship within their Catholic group. For about 14 years Carol and Bob split their time between Red Feather Lakes and Sun City West, Arizona where they wintered. She loved swimming in the Arizona outdoor pools all winter long and especially swimming with her grandchildren. The grandchildren have wonderful memories playing board games with Grandma Carol. She was eternally proud of her daughters and grandchildren.

In 2021 Carol and Bob moved down the mountain to their current home in Eaton, Co. In spite of her lifelong physical fitness in May 2024 Carol was diagnosed with ALS/Lou Gehrig's Disease. Carol's family is profoundly thankful for Bob's caretaking in their home, helped by the many caring hospice nurses, Senior Helpers, devoted friends and neighbors who compassionately cared for her at home in recent months. She was deeply appreciative of visits from St. Joseph's Church.

She is survived by her loving and devoted husband, Bob, her daughters Michelle Riley, Marcy Strazer Concannon (Brian), Mary Jean Strazer (Anthony Draye) and grandchildren Austin (Jenna) and Duncan Riley, Evan and Georgia Concannon, Jack, Jonah and Jacob Draye and her sister, Sandra Barth (Joe). She was predeceased by her parents, her sister, Susan Fundingsland and aunt Lois V. Johnson.

Her Memorial Mass and reception will be held at St. Joseph's Church in Fort Collins, CO on Friday November 29th at 10:30 am. Her ashes will be interred at Ascension Catholic Cemetery in Libertyville, Illinois.

In lieu of flowers or gifts, the family kindly appreciates donations to the local ALS United Rocky Mountain chapter of Colorado. (<https://alsrockymountain.org/donate/>)



# Previous Events

## Memorial Mass

NOV **29**. 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM (MT)

Saint Joseph Catholic Church  
300 West Mountain  
Fort Collins, CO 80521

## Reception

NOV **29**. 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM (MT)

Saint Joseph Catholic Church  
300 West Mountain  
Fort Collins, CO 80521

# Tribute Wall

LT

“ I met Carol when we bought a cabin near her is at Crystal Lakes. Together we published her story in my Chicken Soup for the Soul books, and she became such an inspirational writer for so many people. Her encouragement for other writers has gone on to bless our world beyond measure. Her words will live on forever. I treasure our friendship. LeAnn Thieman

LeAnn Thieman - November 29, 2024 at 11:47 AM

RP

“ Marcy, I was sorry to read about your mother's passing. However, I now know where your sense of fun and adventure came from. Your Mom seems to be quite accomplished and supportive. I am sorry to think of her suffering but grateful she was a woman of faith. I am holding you, Brian, Evan, & Georgia in my thoughts. XOXOXO

Regina Porter - November 22, 2024 at 03:00 PM

MD

“ Remembering Carol: her glorious smile, poticia, her deep faith, courage, talented writer, & proud Grandmother . Hugo and I treasured our Phoenix visits with Carol and Bob at Cracker Barrel where we would talk for hours. Thoughts and prayers with all the family. She is in the hands of the Lord. Much love, Mary Ann Draye



Mary Ann Draye - November 19, 2024 at 05:20 PM

MD

“ 3 files added to the album Carol Strazer tribute wall



Mary Ann Draye - November 19, 2024 at 05:09 PM

RC

*Dear Bob,*

*I was shocked and so saddened to hear of Carols passing. I thought of her often during the summer and fully expected to see her in Sun City West this winter. She was such a spiritual and lovely person, someone I wanted to emulate. Hoping to see u soon,  
John and Rosemary c*

Rosemary Copeland - November 25, 2024 at 10:35 AM

SM

*Dear Bob, Michelle, Marcy, Mary, and Sandy ... Carol was always like an older sister to me. We had a number of years separating us, but our spirits were very much in sync on those occasions when we were able to get together. And you all were gifted to me, as well, and I have enjoyed those moments where we could also be together. Carol was beloved by my Mom and Dad. I hope she knew that; I believe she did. My wife, Claire, and I had the great fortune to be able to stay overnight in the beautiful Red Feather Lakes home on our cross-country trek to Wisconsin after our marriage in California. Making room for our U-Haul, welcoming our dog Tulsa into the home, and treating us to a special dinner that evening was something I will remember always. May Carol's dear soul rest in peace and may all the family know in their hearts that she is at home in the eternal embrace of God. She has been a good and faithful servant.*

*Sending you much love.*

*Your Cousin,  
— Stewart Mathison*

Stewart Mathison - November 29, 2024 at 10:53 AM

TF

*I'm so very sorry to hear of Carol's passing. As her longtime writer's coach, Carol and I go way back. Her tenacity, determination, talent, and love of her writing always inspired me. It was such a joy to work with her on every project and, over time, we became friends. In fact, I've been watching my mailbox for her Christmas letter, which she never failed to send.*

*Carol's love of her family came through in every single thing she wrote, and my heart is with you all. I will miss her dearly. She was an unfailing kind, faithful, dedicated, generous person, and I feel blessed to have known her.*

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**Teresa Funke** - December 04, 2024 at 01:35 PM

JW

*Dear Bob,  
Not receiving Carol's early bird November Christmas card this year led me to search the internet for her. I'm so sorry to have confirmed my suspicions of her passing.  
Many memories of her chairing Clackamas County community leaders' monthly meetings, her later participation with me on the NAMI board and our later friendship. Loved visiting with you both at your cabin prior to my sorority reunion in Ft. Collins. I was so honored to work with Carol on her collection of "Why We Stay" stories. She was an amazing and accomplished person. Sorry I was not able to accept your invitation to visit you both in Arizona.*

*Love and sympathy, Judy Redler Winter, Portland, OR*

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**Judy Redler Winter** - December 20, 2024 at 04:22 PM