



Jean Melcher

August 21, 1921 - September 14, 2013

Jean N. Melcher , August 21, 1921—September 14, 2013

Jean Searle Nelson Melcher died peacefully at the home of her loving caregivers, Venita and Ron Christian on September 14, 2013. For 11 years, she had been residing in Fort Collins, Colorado, so she could be near her daughter, who was at her side as she passed away.

Preceded in birth by her sisters, Sylvia and Carol, Jean was born on August 21, 1921 in West Haven, Connecticut. She mastered the piano at an early age, and graduated with honors from West Haven High School in 1939. She was an active member of the West Haven Rainbow Girls Assembly 5, a philanthropic youth organization of the Freemason Fraternal Order, for which she created drawings to advertise their events. She also designed and drew cover art for The Phosphate, a newsletter for the West Haven First Congregational Church Sunday school, and she had a flair for fashion and loved designing clothes for paper models with pen and watercolors.

With perfect pitch and a special gift for making music through keyboard instruments, Jean went on to study organ at Yale University's School of Music, where she earned her Bachelor of Music in 1944. Upon graduation, Jean secured a position as organist with the Edgewood Congregational Church in West Haven, where she met Pierson Fort Melcher, also a Yale graduate. Pierson sang in the choir and was impressed by the organist who "...played magnificently and was not afraid to pull out the stops!" They were married in 1952 and raised two children, Cynthia and Peter, who were born in

Carpenteria, California, where Pierson taught English before moving on to head many other schools. The family eventually landed at St. Stephen's School in Austin, TX; St. Louis Country Day School in St. Louis, MO; Chadwick School in Rolling Hills, CA; St. Margaret's School in Waterbury, CT; and the Southborough School in Southborough, MA, where Jean lived for 30 years. Jean and Pierson also traveled extensively in Europe and across the United States.

While raising the children, Jean put her organ career on hold, although she often volunteered for local organizations, including the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra—for which she served on the Peninsula committee to support youth music education—and various hospitals in the greater Boston area. Jean also rekindled her passion for the visual arts, winning awards for her photography and taking classes in watercoloring. As an incredibly talented seamstress, she often sewed unique and exquisite clothing for herself and the family. Later in life, birdwatching became one of Jean's passions, and she subsequently joined the Brookline and Forbush bird clubs in Massachusetts. As a master of words, she also was a crossword puzzle whiz and an excellent editor.

Once the children were in college, Jean returned to her music career by serving as a substitute organist for churches in the greater Boston-Worcester region and teaching piano to young students in her Southborough home. As an active member of the New England Piano Teachers Association, she enrolled many students in their recitals. She also served as an accompanist for the Assabet Valley Mastersingers in central Massachusetts. Jean enjoyed membership with the American Guild of Organists, attending many of their events across the country, including an annual convention in Denver, for which numerous recitals were played on several of the world-class organs in nearby Fort Collins. When Jean later moved to Fort Collins, she continued to enjoy local organ recitals by Colorado State University faculty and students, as well as many visiting organists. Never wanting to give up her music career, Jean also served as accompanist for the annual shows put on by the Fort

Collins senior living residence at which she lived for five years.

Jean is survived by her two children, Cynthia Melcher (Fort Collins, CO) and Peter Melcher (Cordova, TN); nephews Jim Berrie (River Edge, NJ) and Donald N. Berrie (Warren, ME); and grandchildren, Thorne Melcher (Atlanta, GA), Forte Melcher (Chattanooga, TN), and Tucker and Luke Melcher (Cordova, TN). Memorial services will be held on September 28, 2013, at 3:00 p.m. at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 2000 Stover St., Fort Collins, CO. A reception and refreshments will follow at St. Luke's Parrish Hall. A celebration of life will be held in New England at a later date, most likely in summer 2014 (details will be posted here later). Jean will be interred with her parents, Herbert S. and Sadie S. Nelson, at Evergreen Cemetery in New Haven, Connecticut.

In lieu of flowers, the family would prefer that donations be made in Jean's memory to the Yale School of Music Alumni Fund (<https://darcyportal.yale.edu/page.aspx?pid=319>), or the Northern Colorado Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association (415 Peterson St., Ft. Collins, CO 80524; 970.472.9798; emmalie.conner@alz.org).

Previous Events

Memorial Service

SEP **28.** 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM (MT)

St. Luke's Episcopal Church
2000 Stover Street
Fort Collins, CO 80525

Tribute Wall



“ *Jean Melcher*

October 25, 2022 at 06:14 PM



“ *Very, very sad to hear of this. She was my piano teacher for many years in Southborough, and was one of the most important influences in my musical career. She was a beautiful and wonderfully gifted woman who will be missed dearly. Sorry to have heard of her passing so late. Rest in Peace, Mrs. Melcher.*

Lisa Breen - November 18, 2013 at 06:34 PM



“ *1 file added to the album Jean Melcher*



Jim Berrie - October 29, 2013 at 12:41 AM

TH

“ Jean had a wonderful, intelligent and sly sense of humor. When she was joking she would get a sparkle in her eyes and a devilish grin. She had me laughing every time we were together. She loved playing Scrabble, and taught me how to play. We even played Scrabble at the Bean Cycle Coffee Shop in Fort Collins. She enjoyed seeing all the young people coming and going and the atmosphere at the coffee shop. We also shared some fun times going out to dinner. I am grateful she was part of my life and the memories she gave me will be in my heart and mind for the rest of my life.

Thank you Cynthia, for allowing me into your mothers life. I am grateful.

Love Terri Hicks

Terri Hicks - September 28, 2013 at 11:37 AM

KH

“ I knew Jean only in her later years. She loved to talk about her days in New Haven and her skills. As she moved thru different settings she always maintained her sense of dignity and grace. Jean was very lucky to have a loving supportive family, especially Cynthia and her care.

Kirsten Hartman - September 27, 2013 at 03:08 PM

CB

“ Christine Budd purchased the A Full Life for the family of Jean Melcher.



Christine Budd - September 27, 2013 at 11:23 AM

CM

“ 4 files added to the tribute wall



Cynthia Melcher - September 25, 2013 at 01:05 AM

VC

“ *In Tribute to Jean Melcher and her daughter, Cynthia*

As a Care Provider, I was most privileged to come along side Jean Melcher for almost three years. Amidst her health struggles, I saw Jean as a noble, classy lady! Her sensitivity to every aspect of her world was intriguing! Her determination to face her limitations in a noble way was inspiring! Her outward look to the needs and feelings of others was so admirable! Her unflinching wit brought laughter to the mundane!

Any mother who is blessed with a daughter as hers, Cynthia, is truly fortunate! Cynthia's creative, lavish, caring touches brought sunshine into her mother's, then confined, world and into our world as care givers. Thank you Cynthia, for entrusting your mother into our care! Truly we were the recipients!

Venita Christian

Venita Christian - September 24, 2013 at 10:45 AM



“ 11 files added to the album *Jean Melcher*



Goes Funeral Care & Crematory - September 20, 2013 at 03:45 PM