



Joyce Elaine Wandersee

June 17, 1925 - March 8, 2015

Joyce Elaine Wandersee was born 6/17/1925 in Montrose Minnesota. She was the youngest of 5 children. Her father was William Wandersee of German descent and Mary Anderson of Swedish descent. Both her parents were first generation Americans. Joyce's father was a blacksmith, and after the advent of automobiles, also opened a garage/gas station. He taught Joyce how to drive at a very young age as she helped him around the garage. When she was 16, her father took her to the court house, told the officials that she could drive, and she was issued a driver's license! When she was 16, her summer job was to drive a tractor for a farmer. The next summer, she drove a grain truck for a mill company in her home town. After the USA entered WWII, Joyce did her part by operating a crane in Minneapolis at the age of 18!

Joyce graduated from Mankato State University in 1948 with a teaching degree. Her first three teaching jobs were in Washington, Wyoming and Oregon. She then taught in Anchorage, Alaska for 3 years. She was then asked to take a 6 month teaching job in Wellington, New Zealand. During that time she lived with a family there and they remained friends for the rest of Joyce's life. Joyce always said that New Zealand was her favorite place of all the places she lived. In 1958 she got a nine month teaching job in Colombia, South America. Joyce said it was a very poor country and very difficult to live there. (I can just imagine!).

In 1962 Joyce traveled to the island of Yap and a friend of hers convinced her

to stay and teach summer school (June through November). There were only three houses on Yap and he had one of them. Joyce stayed with him and his family.

In 1964, Joyce went to the Olympics in Tokyo, Japan. Jesse Owens was staying at the same hotel she was (he was the Grand Marshal or something like that). Joyce had breakfast with Jesse and his wife most mornings.

In 1965, Joyce went to Oslo, Norway for nine weeks of further education. They would travel to other countries, such as Sweden, to meet with other teachers and compare notes.

Joyce traveled extensively, but several of her trips stood out in her mind. In 1954 she was a member of a group sent to Point Barrow in the North Pole to see if the area could be a tourist attraction. The plane landed on ice and the travelers were transported by dog sled to the experimental hotel. During that time she was able to witness a whale kill by the villagers and traveled (again by dog sled) to the site of the Will Rogers/ William Post plane crash. Another memorable trip was a three week African safari in 1972, and another was her Peruvian trip into the jungles along the Amazon. Once while traveling in Thailand, she had the opportunity to travel to Cambodia in an old American weapons carrier. There were very few roads or people and the "hotel" only had a vase of water for washing, but she saw magnificent temples and their surrounding areas. Other favorite trips were to Iraq and China. Joyce said that she had been "everywhere except Mexico".

In between all of this, Joyce was also teaching school in Guam. She was in Guam from 1958 until 1977. She bought a ranch in Guam with a friend and lived there with their beloved Guam Boonie dog, Tory Rancho. Joyce retired from teaching in 1976, but stayed in Guam until moving to Kaneohe, Hawaii in June 1977. Joyce worked in a home improvement store in Kaneohe until

leaving Hawaii in 1990 to move to Las Cruces, New Mexico. She retired completely at that time. In 2000, Joyce moved to Fort Collins, Colorado because she wanted to experience winter again. She only intended to stay two years and move on, but she remained in Fort Collins for the rest of her life. While in Colorado, she was very active and enjoyed hiking and snow shoeing.

Joyce enjoyed her life at Good Samaritan in Fort Collins. She made many friends and was a well-known figure within the Good Samaritan community. Joyce was raised in the Lutheran Church and continued to attend chapel at the facility for as long as she was able. She is survived by three great-nieces and two great-nephews, seven great-great-nephews and four great-great nieces, and one great-great-great nephew.

She was an inspiration and a legend to her family members and she will be missed by all.

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Tribute Wall



“ Joyce Elaine Wandersee

October 25, 2022 at 06:14 PM



“ Ms Wandersee was my PE teacher at Dededo Junior High in Guam. She taught us handball and basketball. She was an excellent teacher I will never forget her. Rest in peace Ms Wandersee. Thank you, I am blessed to have known you.

Maryann Penaflor-Aquilizan - February 28, 2021 at 07:14 AM



“ I will truly miss, Joyce! I had adopted her as if she were a family member. Since I recently lost my parents, I told her she was my surrogate Mother. I loved to listen to her stories of her travels but I never knew the extent of her adventures. I wished I had known of her amazing travels while she was alive! She could have written quite a book. Whenever I visited her, her face lit up with an ear to ear grin. I am very glad I had the honor of knowing her. She was a spunky and adventurous woman of her time!



Nancy Behm - March 15, 2015 at 09:28 PM



“ Schanna Preuit lit a candle in memory of Joyce Elaine Wandersee



Schanna Preuit - March 13, 2015 at 08:52 PM

SP

Joyce will be missed. I met her 12 years ago at Good Sam. I always enjoyed visiting with her on Sundays & after church.

Schanna Preuit - March 13, 2015 at 08:58 PM