



Mary Ann Leber

May 6, 2024

Mary Ann (Reynolds) Leber, 74, of Fort Collins, CO passed away on May 6, 2024 while holding hands with her best friend and love of her life for nearly 57 years. She was born May 19, 1949 in Minneapolis, MN to June and Art Reynolds.

Mary Ann and her family moved to Greeley, Colorado in August of 1949, where her father was a history professor at Colorado Teachers College, now the University of Northern Colorado. Mary Ann and her sisters, Sue and Linda, grew up in faculty housing on campus and experienced both the comfort of a tightknit community and an at times inconvenient lack of anonymity. Mary Ann graduated from the campus laboratory school, College High, in 1967, the same year that she won the “Betty Crocker Homemaker of Tomorrow” award.

Mary Ann began college at Colorado State University in the fall of 1967. It was during that semester that she met her future husband, Lee Leber of Windsor, CO, while visiting a mutual friend who was a soda jerk at the Campus Pharmacy ice cream fountain. It was truly love at first sight, and the beginning of a nearly 57-year-long love story. Mary Ann and Lee were married on December 23, 1969, two years to the day after they first met.

As the Vietnam War pulled so many young men and women into its vortex, Mary Ann’s education was put on hold to keep Lee in school and out of the

war for as long as possible. When Lee's time to serve became inevitable, Mary Ann followed him through his basic training and language training before they moved to Taiwan, as Lee served in the Air Force. Mary Ann completed her bachelor's degree through a correspondence course while in Taiwan and began teaching at Taipei American School.

The young couple returned to the United States in 1974; they made their home in San Jose, California, and welcomed their two daughters, Rebecca and Angela. They loved living in California and made many lifelong friends, but they wanted their daughters to grow up near their grandparents who still lived in Colorado, so in August of 1981, the family moved to Fort Collins, Colorado.

After staying home with her daughters until they were both in school, Mary Ann returned to teaching in the fall of 1986. She spent the remainder of her teaching career at Beattie Elementary School; she dearly loved teaching at Beattie, and again made many lifelong friends. She prided herself on making school rewarding for all her students whether they needed extra help or an extra challenge. Mary Ann was recognized by her colleagues as Outstanding Teacher of the Year in 1997, she was then recognized as a Poudre School District Distinguished Teacher and by the State of Colorado with the Distinguished Teacher Award.

Mary Ann welcomed her first of five grandchildren in July 2002, and found joy in being a Nana (not Grandma, thank you very much) where she continued spreading her joy of teaching by reading with each of her grandchildren and taking them for discovery walks around the neighborhood.

When Mary Ann retired in 2005, Lee had to convince her to celebrate this milestone with a trip to western Europe. On that trip, they both caught the "travel bug" and over the next 15 years they traveled to 70 countries across

six continents. Wherever they traveled, children were drawn to her; her love of children and teaching transcended any language boundaries.

As Alzheimer's began to take hold of Mary Ann's health, the couple stayed home in Fort Collins, where they would cheer on their favorite sports teams and reflect on their many blessings. Every weekend, they would have Sunday brunch and toast each other: "To the love of my life, and to all our many blessings."

Mary Ann is survived by her husband, Lee, her children Rebecca (Josh) Saunders and Angela Dowling; her 5 grandchildren Hunter Dowling, Kira Dowling, Erik Saunders, Brandt Saunders, and Caitlyn Saunders. She is also survived by 31 nieces and nephews and many more grandnieces and grandnephews. She was preceded in death by her parents, June and Art Reynolds, and her sisters Sue Benfield and Linda Kettl.

A celebration of Mary Ann's life will be held on Saturday, May 25 at 4:00 p.m. at the Gardens on Spring Creek.

In lieu of flowers, Mary Ann would want you to read to a child, reach out to someone who is different than you, count your blessings, and love your neighbor.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

MAY 25. 4:00 PM (MT)

Gardens on Spring Creek
2145 Centre Ave
Fort Collins, CO 80526

A celebration of Mary Ann's life will be held on Saturday, May 25 at 4:00 p.m. at the Gardens on Spring Creek

Tribute Wall

LI

“What a special lady! Bob and I enjoyed our years of CSU basketball sitting next to Mary Ann and Lee. We had lost touch since Covid, but we always remarked about our time together and some special comments we shared: Mary Ann was fond of saying when players were at the foul line, ‘they are FREE throws, make it!’ And then because my Bob coached and played basketball, when the refs called a foul on one of our players, she would turn to Bob and say, ‘was that really a foul?’ Sadly, I lost Bob to Alzheimer’s in January. Lee, I share your grief.

LindaCates - May 21, 2024 at 10:32 AM

KD

“Your mom was my fourth grade teacher at Beattie. I vividly remember her gushing over your photos while telling our class about you, (Rebecca and Angela). She was so proud of you then, and I’m sure she was until her last breath. Sending you the biggest hugs.

Kira (Zeigler) Dykstra - May 17, 2024 at 03:42 PM

PM

“Paul Martin lit a candle in memory of Mary Ann Leber



Paul Martin - May 17, 2024 at 12:23 AM