



Joyce Ann Hetherington

January 12, 1934 - April 1, 2010

Joyce Ann Meyer Hetherington died peacefully on – April 1, 2010 at the Park Bend Health Center in Austin, TX where she was being treated for complications of Parkinson's Disease. Joyce was born 12 January 1934 in Muscatine, Iowa to Carlton Meyer and Violet Shepard Meyer. Her unusual personality led her to become the mother, teacher, homemaker, and friend par excellence. Friends and relatives agree she was a gentle lady who never intentionally hurt anyone – a tradition she proudly carried forward from her most loved and revered mentors, her mother and maternal grandparents.

Early in life she discovered her natural affinity for little children; they were drawn to her like a magnet because of her fairness and, gentle, nurturing, manner. Following her 1952 graduation from Muscatine High School, she enrolled in Muscatine Junior College and in 1954 was awarded an Associate of Arts Degree in Elementary Education. She married William I. Hetherington at Muscatine's Zion Lutheran Church on August 8, 1954 and one month later began the first of many teaching assignments where she would distinguish herself over the next 38 years.

When her husband began his tour of active duty in the Air Force, she accompanied him and taught first grade for two years in a large school system adjacent to Wright Patterson AFB. When the Air Force tour ended, she returned to the University of Iowa and resumed study toward a BA Degree in

Education. With that degree in hand she was contracted by the Iowa City Public Schools – a not insignificant achievement because of the huge teacher oversupply in Iowa City at that time. Four and one half years later she decided to temporarily leave teaching to pursue family interests. Learning of this, the Assistant Superintendent called and begged her to stay one more year to help launch the new Elementary School in North Liberty – a call she considered one of the greatest compliments to ever come her way.

But she declined and instead enrolled at Iowa as a graduate student. Her achievement in the public schools was always well above average but she also was very fond of her friends and relished their many good times together. In the latter half of her undergraduate study, she became even more serious about academics. When her BA degree was awarded, she had missed Phi Beta Kappa distinction by the barest margin!. She continued the same academic fervor as a graduate student. Her record was exemplary and several times her final grade was the highest in the class. While a graduate student, she was elected to membership in Pi Lambda Theta and served as an officer of the Iowa chapter. Joyce loved learning for the sake of learning; it was a rare event to find her without a book in her hand during quiet times. She was an avid student of English history and educational psychology, particularly as it related to teaching and learning reading.

She moved from the Iowa City area in 1971 and devoted her full energy to raising a son, who she hoped would and did! best her own academic record. In 1980, she re-entered classroom teaching as a Kindergarten teacher in San Antonio, Texas. 22 years later she retired again, in a shower of plaudits from parents, students, fellow teachers, administrators and others from the professional communities of San Antonio. Her greatest honor was to be remembered and contacted by former students even after their completion of college.

Joyce didn't warm up to people quickly, a trait that caused those who didn't know her to label her as snobbish. Her many friends strongly deny that saying, instead, "she was only taking time to be sure this was a friendship that she'd really like to keep" because she wasn't in the habit of discarding old friends for new ones. Each time she changed jobs or neighborhoods or cities, her list of friends became larger. Very possibly, her three best date back to her days at Zion Lutheran Elementary, nearly seventy years ago. Her Holiday card list includes a former teaching colleague at Mark Twain Elementary in Iowa City who she hasn't seen or talked to in more than 45 years; nonetheless they still exchanged cards and long personal letters each year!

Survivors include her husband, William, younger brother Larry Meyer of Muscatine, IA, son, Thomas W. Hetherington of Cedar Park, TX, two loving grandchildren and a number of nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents, her beloved sister Marlene Steen and her niece Amy Meyer. Visitation and Funeral services are pending with the Henderson Barker Funeral Home in West Liberty, IA.

Tribute Wall

NO

“ *My deepest condolences to the family for your loss. May your hearts find comfort in knowing that Jehovah God cares. He sent his beloved son, Jesus Christ to die for our sins -John chapter 3 verse 16. One day soon, all suffering and death will be no more -*

NORMAN - June 24, 2012 at 12:00 AM

MA

“ *Joyce was a wonderful teacher and co-worker. She taught both of my children at Country Home and both still have wonderful memories of her. She had a great gift for teaching. She will be missed. You are in my prayers*

Mary Frances Allen - May 14, 2010 at 12:00 AM

LN

“ *Bill Your Family Will Be In My Prayers.. I Am Sorry For Your Loss..*

Lady Navistar - April 08, 2010 at 12:00 AM

MR

“ *Tom, your mom was a wonderful person. My thoughts and prayers are with you.*

Mike Regester - April 04, 2010 at 12:00 AM

JB

“ *Our thoughts and prayers to Bill, Tom, Joan, Benjamin and Susan. Joyce was a very dear friend and I miss her. I will always cherish my memories with Joyce. May God bless you all, Jeanne & Dick*

Jean Brashear - April 03, 2010 at 12:00 AM

MG

“ *My prayers are with you. Joyce was a lovely lady and I enjoyed working with her at Country Home.*

Michelle Gray - April 03, 2010 at 12:00 AM