



Beverly C. Johanson

April 2, 1937 - March 4, 2024

The ever gracious, thoughtful and conscientious Beverly Jean (Curtis) Johanson died peacefully March 4 in Bellingham, her 86 years of life a model of quiet and intelligent warmth.

Born April 2, 1937, in Tacoma to David and Barbara (Ballou) Curtis, Beverly was the youngest of three children — a role she came to realize, with somewhat guilty pleasure, bestowed the privilege of parental indulgence that her considerably older sister and brother did not enjoy. Thus began a life of study, sociability and service marked by a great deal of laughter, numerous lifelong friendships, a multitude of books and great inner strength.

After graduating Stadium High School, Beverly became a proud UW Husky, where she met her husband, Larry Johanson, through their affiliations with Alpha Phi sorority and Delta Tau Delta fraternity. She graduated a quarter early in 1958, had her braces removed, turned 21 and wed the witty Larry, April 12. They were married 50 years, Bev the understated yin to Larry's jovial yang. They raised son Eric and daughter Laura in Bellingham, spending idyllic summers at the family home on Orcas Island.

Beverly was reserved; she appreciated her quiet time — which is maybe why her elementary teaching career was short; first in Bothell after college, and later Bellingham (Roosevelt, 1968). Later still, after earning a mid-life MA in

English from WWU (1987), she taught young adults and retired seniors the art of writing, and the science of lie v. lay.

Bev had perfect pitch, which must have been a delight to her music-teacher mother. She loved music, horns especially, danced in the kitchen to Burt Bacharach (really!) and sang with the Orcas Choral Society after she and Larry moved to Orcas in 2003. She loved the Mariners and vivid colors and knit beautifully. She didn't love bridge, but she dearly loved the three couples she and Larry played it with for decades.

If Bev loved many things, she believed in books and the transportive power of words. Elegant writing, no matter where it showed up, gratified her to no end. To be without a book was to be untethered; she read, she looked things up, she wrote and edited — letters, notes, essays, newsletters, books. Each day, she read the (real) paper and worked the NYT crossword (with a pen). She saved articles, recipes, wise words, funny obituaries and beautiful poems. Then she paperclipped and sent them off or squirreled them away in secret locations throughout her study for future archaeologists to discover.

As a 60+-year member of Bellingham's First Congregational Church, Beverly's involvement there included helping establish the Stephen Ministry; she belonged to PEO (Chapter F) and Monday Club for most of her life, was treasurer for the Doebay Water Users Association for years and later for the Orcas Island Food Bank among other volunteer activities.

Bev did things without fanfare, her life governed by a simple set of unspoken rules: use your mind, move your body and feed your soul; sit up straight, tell the truth, keep complaints to yourself. Know that the strongest ties come by loving without strings. Read and enjoy chocolate daily. Talk to all dogs.

Preceded in death by son Eric (1972) and husband Larry (2008), Beverly is

survived by daughter Laura Johanson, son-in-law Kyle Ringo, grandsons Gus and Joey Ringo and six nieces and nephews. Her steady, inquisitive and upbeat presence will be greatly missed.

A celebration of Beverly's life will be held Friday, May 17 at 11:30 AM at First Congregational Church, 2501 Cornwall Ave. Memorial donations can be made to the Whatcom Community Foundation, Orcas Island Community Foundation or your favorite library.

Tribute Wall

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“ *Laura and family, your obituary is beautifully written and portrays the wonderful woman I knew and with whom i worked. I learned so much from her as we created the Stephen Ministry program together with Bobbi. I have fond memories of being on Orcas. There are many ways Bev touched my life. May God’s comfort hold you close through these days.*

Cindy Bauleke - April 07, 2024 at 12:00 AM