



## Grace Elisabeth McNees Rawlings

October 26, 1925 - July 10, 2017

“Thank you, Lord. I have had a simply wonderful life!”

Grace Elisabeth McNees Rawlings passed away on July 10, 2017, surrounded by family, after 91 years of a very well-lived and well-loved life. Her name defined her.

Grace was born October 26, 1925 to Rev. John and Margaret McNees in Milton-Freewater, OR. She joined her parents and six siblings and moved with them to follow her father’s Methodist church ministry callings to White Swan, WA and then to the Methow Valley, WA in 1931. At sixteen, she was chosen by the Twisp High School student body to be Princess Twisp in the 1942 Wenatchee Apple Blossom Festival. She graduated early at age 16 as valedictorian of her class. While her four brothers were serving in World War II, Grace began her two years of pre-nursing studies at the University of Washington. In 1944, she moved to Spokane to follow her sister Mary into nursing and began training at Deaconess Hospital. Three months into the training, it was discovered that Grace had tuberculosis and she spent the next three years of her life recuperating at Edgecliff Sanatorium, a Spokane County TB hospital. Those years shaped how Grace went on to live her life with purpose and resiliency.

In 1949, Grace married Milt Rawlings and together they raised four children in

the Spokane Valley. They were married 44 years before Milt's death in 1993. Family and friends were their focus. Grace was an avid bridge player, history and genealogy buff. She loved to watch basketball games— especially the Cougars and the Zags— or any teams coached by her son, son-in-law, or daughter-in-law! She had a great sense of humor and a contagious laugh. Grace was a beautiful writer of both poetry and notes, and she often volunteered to do book reviews and button presentations for local groups.

Grace was a very active and engaged citizen in the Spokane community throughout her adult life. When her children were in school she served in their school PTAs, was a State PTA Board-Program Chair, and received a PTA Service Award. She volunteered for over 30 years for Reach to Recovery, a program of the American Cancer Society and assisted the Valley YMCA board in developing teen and senior activities. Grace served as a mentor to many young women, was a short-term foster parent, helped organize the child care center at the First Presbyterian Church downtown, and was active at Millwood Presbyterian church. Grace was proud to be the first woman appointed to the Spokane County Planning Commission in the 1960s and became the first female chair of that group. She was appointed by then Governor John Spellman to the Washington State Boundary Review Board and served on the board of the Planning Association of Washington. In 1973, Grace was one of three who received a “Woman of Distinction” award in Spokane. Grace was a member of Chapter DR. of PEO, League of Women Voters and the Spokane Club. For over 50 years, Grace was part of a small women's group called the “Wednesday Wenches”. These longtime friends met monthly for lunch and laughter. They saw each other's families grow up and supported each other in the up and downs of their lives.

Grace and Milt built a family vacation home at Priest Lake, ID in 1980 where they hosted many family and friends over the years. Grace loved being at the lake and sharing her special place with others and always made sure that

everyone wrote in the visitor book. When she wasn't hosting at Priest Lake, Grace enjoyed travel and took many wonderful trips with family and friends. She and Milt enjoyed visits to the Hawaiian Islands and many areas in the Pacific Northwest. In her later years, Grace's travels included going to Ireland, France, Germany, Mexico, Jamaica, Canada, the Panama Canal, and many areas of the United States.

Grace is survived by her son Rick Rawlings and wife Donna; daughter Ann Rawlings and husband Roger Long; daughter Linda Crawford and husband Ken; and son Tom Rawlings and wife Becky. She will be fondly remembered by granddaughters Stacey Rawlings Sturgill, Katie Crawford Woods, and Sarah Crawford; great granddaughters Angelica, Yasmine, and Jamiah Rawlings, and Charlotte Woods; and great-great grandson Jaxson Rawlings. Grace is also survived by her special cousin Dick Miller and by numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins as well as many longtime friends. She was preceded in death by her husband Milton G. Rawlings, her parents John and Margaret McNees, and her six siblings Marrene, John, Richard, Mary, Donald, Robert, and their spouses.

The family would like to thank the many caregivers and friends that supported Grace in her last years, especially the owners and staff of Lakeside Gardens where she lived this past year.

A private family burial was held at the Pines Cemetery in the Spokane Valley on July 26. Celebrations of Grace's life will be held at Millwood Presbyterian Church in the Spokane Valley on Saturday, September 9th at 2 p.m. and at the First Congregational Church of Bellingham on Saturday, September 23rd at 1 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the Priest Lake Public Library,

the Spokane Valley Heritage Museum, or a charity of your choice.

# Tribute Wall

KO

“ Hey Rick, so saddened to hear of your Mom's passing. Sounds like she had a long, wonderful life. I know it's tough to have both parents gone. I still think about Milt to tell you the truth. Just wanted to let you know I'm thinking about you and your family. You've always been a fine man and caring person, a testament to your great upbringing by two special people. God bless you all❤️.

---

**Kevin olson** - July 10, 2017 at 12:00 AM