



Leona Gail Zander

November 20, 1935 - July 25, 2022

Leona (Lee) Gail (Emerson) Zander, age 86 died on July 25, 2022, surrounded by her family at home in Bellingham, WA. She was born on November 20, 1935, in Spokane, WA, to Kent T. Emerson and Julia E. (Tarbert) Emerson and lived at Old Lincoln, near Peach, Washington, close to her family's sawmill. The family's G.W. Emerson Mill helped harvest trees for the reservoir behind Grand Coulee Dam and the expansion of Lake Roosevelt to the Canadian border.

In 1940, her family moved to Wilbur, WA where their sawmill was relocated. Leona attended school in Wilbur from 1st through 12th grade, graduating as valedictorian of her class. She loved school, singing, playing the piano, and playing the trombone in the band. As a Girl Scout, she had lively adventures, especially at Camp Four Echoes in Idaho. She enjoyed playing baseball and football with her brother Darryl and cousins; she was called "Babe Ruth" for her homeruns at school recess. She and her sister Carol, and brother Darryl, were close in age and had fun all being in high school at the same time. During the summers she was a lifeguard and taught swimming at the Wilbur public pool.

She attended Whitman College on an academic scholarship for two years then transferred to Washington State University, where she both graduated and met her husband Almer (Al) Zander. They were married August 22, 1959.

They both attended the University of Arizona, where she received her master's degree in Teaching/Physical Education. She worked as a high school P.E. teacher in Kennewick and Spokane, and as a substitute teacher in Whatcom County. She started a preschool/daycare out of her home on the Kelly Road, which she ran successfully for 9 years. She enjoyed being a P.E. teacher, preschool teacher, and a mom, plus being a community helper, 4-H leader, Bible Study leader, Sunday School teacher and Child Evangelism supporter. She loved and cared for her children, grandchildren, and the children of many others over the years, providing a nurturing and fun atmosphere for them to learn and grow. Leona and Al enjoyed watching their children and grandchildren grow up in band, dance, basketball, cross country, track, soccer, volleyball, softball, football, and baseball. As a couple, they were fortunate to travel to Hawaii, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and South Korea. They camped and hiked with family and took trips around the U.S. to various family reunions. Leona also took a post-college graduation trip to Europe before she was married. She traveled to England and Scotland at age 81, with her daughter Rebecca. She loved making quilts and Afghans for her children and grandchildren. Most of all, she loved her friends and family and great silly jokes. She brought so much joy into the lives of everyone around her. She was full of energy right up until the end of her life. She was strong and courageous and always up for an adventure: an outing, swim, boat ride, family gathering, or helping others in some way. Leona said, "I do look into the future (for) when I come face-to-face with the Lord Jesus Christ."

Leona and Al were married for 61 years and had five children: Alene Zander, Ann (Nick C.) Zander Hansen, Rebecca (Bob) Morrow, Duane (Jodi) Zander and Ruth (Roger W.) Zander, eight grandchildren: Zoë; Allison (Colton) and Chad; Alex, Elaina, and Jack; Kent and Ella. She is also survived by her sister Carol (Curt) Jones, brother Darryl (Maxine) Emerson, beloved nieces, nephews, and cousins. Leona was preceded in death by her husband, Almer (Al) Zander, her parents, and many cousins, aunts, and uncles of the Emerson

and Tarbert families.

The Graveside Service will be held at Moles Farewell Tributes and Cemetery, 5700 Northwest Dr. Ferndale, WA, Wednesday, August 3rd at 10:00 AM with a reception following.

Leona's Memorial Service will be held on Friday, August 5th, 2022, at 3:00 in the afternoon at Northside Community Church, 950 Kline Rd, Bellingham, WA 98226 with a reception following. Leona's husband Al Zander, who died October 8, 2020, will also be honored at this service.

Donations in Leona's memory may be made to the Prevent Cancer Foundation. For more information, please click the "Charities & Donations" tab.

Tribute Wall

TR

“ I was acquainted with Al, Leona and family for a short time in 2020. I am honored to have spent time in their peaceful home, witnessing the love and adoration they have for one another. Leona was a true lady and the life she lived is evident in her children and grandchildren.
Psalm 68:3

TR - August 10, 2022 at 12:00 AM

BM

“ A great life and a person to be celebrated. I've lived about half of my seventy four years in the Almira area. I have vivid memories of swimming lessons at the Wilbur pool. When I read about Leona in the Wilbur paper, that memory came back to me, I was certain Leona was giving lessons, I may have been 10 -12 years old at the time. At any point in one's legacy, a positive influence is surely forever. I've asked about who our instructor was, and the name that stayed with me all these years, sadly that verification arrived today. However, an obituary, as daunting as that seems, is for Leona a tribute of how to live.

Bill McKay - August 05, 2022 at 12:00 AM

JR

“ *Leona was a dear dear lady and someone to admire. I will miss and think of her often. She was a great encourager and someone you knew was cheering you on in life. I so enjoyed sharing silly jokes with her. She always had a good one whenever we talked. I loved hearing of her adventures and especially her trips to Lake Chelan with Al and family. She was fearless. Leona was also a committed Jesus follower and you could tell how important her faith was because she lived it through continual service and love to others. I had the privilege of volunteering with Leona several times while serving kids with varying abilities. She had no problem in her 80s jumping in and doing whatever she could to engage with little ones even if it meant getting down on the floor to play trains. What an example she set to not retreat with age and instead to advance and let God use you wherever He can. Leona was truly a blessing to know and my thoughts and prayers go out to her family whom she loved and spoke of so much.*

Jeremy Rische - August 05, 2022 at 12:00 AM

JH

“ *Susan and I remember all the joyous family gatherings Lee and Al so generously shared at their home on Kelly Rd. Our beloved cousins will be remembered most often by us for those happy occasions to reconnect and for the obvious love of family flowing from them both.*

Jim Harrison - July 31, 2022 at 12:00 AM