



Eleanor Ann Groom

July 16, 1931 - November 11, 2017



Eleanor Ann Johnson Groom was born on July 16, 1931 in Muncie, Indiana to parents Earl A and Lennie Hunt Johnson. Ellie's school years were spent at the Burris Laboratory School, established in 1929 as part of the Teachers College on the campus of Ball State University in Muncie. Ellie's father was the Principal of Burris during those years, and she often noted the challenges of growing up as the "Principal's Kid", something she didn't even escape in college, as her father later served as Dean Emeritus of the Teachers College at Ball State, where Ellie completed her Masters Degree. Ellie obtained her Bachelor's Degree from Indiana University, and was very proud of her Hoosier heritage. While at Indiana University Ellie pledged to the Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority, and was a lifelong Kappa supporter, enjoying the friendship of other sorority women for many years as part of her participation in Panhellenic.

Upon completing her education, and eager to achieve independence, Ellie secured a teaching job in Tucson, Arizona where she began her career as an elementary school teacher. After marrying (now former) husband Robert Groom in 1956, they moved to Texas, where Ellie taught elementary school in El Paso and they began to raise their family with the birth of their son Steve. The family moved on to Denver, Colorado where daughter Sarah and son Randy were born. Later moves took the family to Olympia, Washington and to Northridge, California.

Ellie was taught a love of literature and the arts by her mother, a legacy she perpetuated teaching her children to read and love music and the performing arts at early ages. She ceased teaching school, which she loved, to raise her children and was very active in school activities and community groups.

Ellie and Randy moved to Fresno in 1978 to join Sarah who was attending college at Fresno State. Ellie returned to work, and spent quite a few years at the IRS service center in Fresno. Ellie later followed Randy to Visalia and began teaching high school students at Sierra Vista (Independent Study) High School in Tulare. Having returned to her love of teaching, she served the students of Sierra Vista for many years ♦ teaching until the age of 82. Her students challenged her and gave her purpose. She was a firm but fair teacher and the legacy of her extraordinarily long career helped many students overcome life challenges to graduate from high school.

As with many Hoosiers, Ellie was an avid fan of basketball from an early age, and even much later in life could comment quite effectively on the state of the IU basketball team and players, or the brackets of the NCAA March Madness each year.

She was also a lifelong Presbyterian, active in a variety of lay roles throughout her life, most recently as a member of the Exeter Presbyterian Church. She was active with, and enjoyed the company of, her friends in AAUW and her Blue Chippers investment club. In her final year, Ellie moved into Quail Park Assisted Living in Visalia, where she was among many friends and bridge partners. Bridge playing was a hobby and skill that Ellie enjoyed to the end, and many of her best friends were found around the bridge table. Over the past 30 years Ellie fought  and beat  breast cancer on three separate occasions. She participated in clinical trials for extended chemotherapy that served to improve cancer treatment for other women. Ultimately her nemesis returned in a particularly aggressive form and she succumbed within weeks after diagnosis. Ellie passed into the hands of her Lord on November 11, 2017 in her home at Quail Park, surrounded by her family.

Ellie is survived by siblings Patricia Diebel, Earl A. (Anita) Johnson, and Margaret (Owen) Thomas; children Steve (Kathleen) Groom, Sarah (Gary) McDonald, and Randy (Shelly) Groom; grandchildren Alex (Tessa) Lawson, Peter (Heather) Lawson, Greg and Brad McDonald, Stephanie and Emily Groom, David Marsceau, Amanda (David) Swanson, Tyler (Kelly) Groom, Erin (Bryce) Beatie, and Holly Groom, and six great-grandchildren; and her faithful canine companion Sadie.

A memorial service and celebration of life will be held at the First Presbyterian Church of Visalia on Saturday December 9th at 1:00 p.m. The church is located at 215 N. Locust Street. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the American Cancer Society, perhaps as part of their annual Relay for Life events, which Ellie supported as a proud longtime cancer survivor.

Memorial Tributes and Condolences can be offered by logging onto www.salseranddillard.com.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

DEC 9. 1:00 PM (PT)

First Presbyterian Church of Visalia
215 N. Locust St.
Visalia, CA 93291

Tribute Wall

RM

“ I am sad to find my coworker and friend is gone. We exchanged Christmas Cards for many years as well as worked side by side at the IRS before she retired. She was a beautiful soul & friend & I will miss her dearly. A few years I stopped getting cards & our yearly letters. As I got my yearly Christmas cards ready to be mailed out, I thought I'd do a search & ran across this news of her passing. Thank you Ellie for being a wonderful friend and I will miss YOU. Fly high with the Angels. RUTH MORENO



Ruth Moreno - December 16, 2020 at 01:03 AM

OF

“ Owen & Meg Thomas and family purchased the Ocean Breeze Spray for the family of Eleanor Ann Groom.



Owen & Meg Thomas and family - December 06, 2017 at 10:47 AM

LH

“ What a lovely tribute (obituary) for Ellie. I so enjoyed knowing her and playing bridge for many years in Visalia. I last saw her two years ago when we were back visiting and a friend had us in for bridge. I'm sure she was quite comfortable at Quail Park...a place where many bridge players I know reside!! Thinking of you all. I know you will miss her.
Lettie (and Dave) Harrald Sun Lakes AZ

Lettie Harrald - November 30, 2017 at 04:47 PM

RG

“ Knowing Ellie during her time at Sierra Vista High School in Tulare, it was evident that she was an amazing teacher and was loved and respected by everyone.

Her age did not matter to her students as they recognized that she expected them to work because she really cared about them. She was a great role model for fellow teachers. She impacted us all.

Ross Gentry

Ross Gentry - November 22, 2017 at 10:55 PM