



Carol Graham

November 25, 2009

Obituary of Carol Graham

Carol Jean Munson Graham was delivered into the world on December 15, 1944, came home from the hospital on Christmas Eve and was placed in her basket under the Christmas tree. Carol was the third of four children of the Ardis and Halvor Munson family, and aptly named for the Christmas season. The Munson family lived and prospered on the 3rd generation family owned and operated dairy farm at Saude, IA. Carol grew up working, playing and learning with her siblings. Whether it was attending daily classes in the one-room schoolhouse, playing in the creek, doing milking chores, enjoying the homemade lefsa (a Norwegian must have!) or exploring the woods around Saude, there was always fun to be had and memories to be made.

After graduating from Cresco High School, Carol attended Iowa State University to earn her Bachelor's Degree in Child Development/Elementary Education and a National Early Childhood Education Certificate meaning she could teach, be a preschool director, or a nursing home director in all 50 states. At Iowa State, Carol greatly enjoyed her new family of sorority sisters at Alpha Delta Pi. Her sorority sisters weren't the only new family that she met at Iowa State! Carol also met her future husband, Michael, while on a Woodsy with her roommates. Carol and Mike enjoyed a courtship (and many dates in

Mike's red Ford convertible) throughout their college years culminating in their wedding on September 3, 1966.

Carol and Mike celebrated their 43rd wedding anniversary in 2009. Their marriage was an adventure with many different homes and splendid travel experiences. Immediately after their marriage, the happy couple moved to Pensacola, FL where Mike finished Naval Flight School to earn his Navy Wings, and Carol got a fourth grade teaching job the day she applied. After flight school, the Navy stationed Mike at Lakehurst, NJ, where he was soon deployed on two separate tours to Vietnam. While Mike served our country, Carol continued molding the minds of our future leaders teaching fifth grade in Toms River, NJ. During their stay in Lakehurst, Carol gave birth to their first three children; Eric, Jennifer and Andrea

When Mike completed his military tour, he and Carol moved to the Munson family farm in Saude, where together, they modified the farm to raise pork, beef, corn and soybeans. Shortly after moving back to Iowa, Carol gave birth to their fourth child, Kathryn. Carol resumed her teaching career by substitute teaching while the children were very young. When the kids entered school, Carol accepted the challenging position of being the teacher for the one-room schoolhouse that was a part of the Jericho Lutheran church. Carol jokes that teaching nine grade levels all at once in one year was equivalent to teaching 20 years in any other school! After teaching kindergarten through 8th grade all at one time, Carol took a 'reprieve' and moved onto teaching kindergarten full time. Carol then became the Preschool Director at the United Methodist Church, which she held until she and Mike moved to Iowa City, IA. In her spare time, she sold World Books to the rural community earning a trip to Hawaii, drove a tractor during corn harvest, and she and Mike supported the high school fundraising activities for the band and choir, and escorting the

students on a trip to Disney World. It was during this busy time of her life that she was chosen as Woman of the Year. Carol shaped the minds of many students and future community leaders while teaching both kindergarten and preschool. She also shaped our minds, as on many driving vacations she would come up with games to keep the time passing quickly. She was always there to listen when you needed her, and respected your personal space when you weren't ready to need her.

When Mike received a promotion with the USDA, he and Carol moved to Iowa City, IA where they resided for three years before moving to Gainesville, FL then onto Columbia, MD and back to Gainesville, FL. Carol continued to pursue her love of teaching and children as a teacher at the Gainesville Country Day School and as the Title I reading specialist at P.K Young Research and Development School at the University of Florida.

After Carol's retirement, she and Mike moved to The Villages in 2006. There she picked up right where she left off on her early love of both art and music. As a life long artist, Carol had always had a passion for painting whether it be oil, rosemaling (Norwegian folk art) or watercolor. She greatly enjoyed creating masterpieces for both family and friends. Many cherished cards and paintings are framed and hanging in prized locations!

Carol's passion for music began early in childhood from her first piano lesson to listening to the "cutting edge" music classes broadcast into the one-room school house by public radio. Her passion continued throughout her life as a flautist in high school, teaching many neighbor children how to play and appreciate the piano, and sitting through and encouraging her children's

numerous piano recitals, band, musical performances and choir concerts. After moving to The Villages, Carol picked up her flute (that hadn't been touched since high school!) and joined the New Horizons Concert Band. Being a member of the Band offered Carol the opportunity to meet great new friends and forge cherished friendships.

Traveling and experiencing different cultures was an important part of Carol's life. She had great memories of traveling to all fifty states, Canada, Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean. The teacher in her encouraged her children to embrace and celebrate the differences amongst us. Loving, passionate, optimistic, and enthusiastic are just a few ways to describe her zest for life, and she proved it everyday with touching the hearts and minds of everyone with a great smile, lots of good advice, and sometimes misplaced punch lines in her Ole and Lena jokes.

In 2006, at the height of what was to be the 'Golden Years', Carol was diagnosed with Squamous Cell Carcinoma along with Lymphoma. She refused to let her diagnosis rule her life and continued 'Dancing in the Rain' and enjoying every moment of her life. After a courageous 3-year battle, Carol lost her battle to cancer on November 25, 2009. Her untimely departure leaves behind her loving husband of 43 years, Michael; her four children, Eric Graham of Waukesha, WI, Jennifer Fraunfelter of Ocala, FL, Andrea Collins of Perry Hall, MD and Kathryn Graham of Dallas, TX; Eight Grandchildren, Nicole Graham, Alexander Graham, Patrick Graham, Melina Graham, Riley Fraunfelter, Macy Fraunfelter, Ryan Collins and Kara Collins; three siblings, David Munson of Weatherby, MO, Mary Powers of Camano Island, WA, and Jann Schmitz of Bettendorf, IA; 5 'outlaws' (siblings in-law); thirteen nieces and nephews; numerous cousins, and hundreds of friends.

Carol lived with a passion that only comes to those who truly enjoy life and the lives of those whose paths she crossed. An exceptional mother and wife, avid painter, music lover and joke teller, and a Norwegian through and through, Carol never met a stranger, and was a friend to all she met. Carol would tell you to enjoy and celebrate every moment that has been afforded to you in this lifetime.

The memorial service Celebrating Carol's life will be held on Friday, November 27, 2009 at 3:00 PM at Beyers Funeral Home, Lady Lake, FL. In lieu of flowers, Carol's wishes are that memorial donations be made to your local American Cancer Society.

Services

Memorial Services will be held on Friday, November 27, 2009 at 3:00 PM at Beyers Funeral Home Chapel, Lady Lake, FL.

Memorial Donations

Your local American Cancer Society.

Tribute Wall

ET

“ Dear Mike and family, My thoughts and prayers are with you during this difficult loss. Carol was a beautiful lady and a joy to know. May God's love comfort you. Elaine and Steve Truluck

Elaine Truluck - October 01, 2014 at 12:00 AM

SB

“ We have lost a very special friend...she was like family...Enjoyed our conversations about growing up on a farm...we will never forget, but will always have fond memories...Peace to your family...God bless

Stan & Marge Blasko - October 01, 2014 at 12:00 AM

VS

“ my deepest sympathy for your loss. i am sure carol's spirit will shine through all of those she loved. peace and love, vinay.

Vinay Singh - October 01, 2014 at 12:00 AM

TK

“ there are no words that can comfort you at this time the best we can do is to tell you we felt as if we lost family also,

tom and barb kenney - October 01, 2014 at 12:00 AM

LJ

“ We send our sincere sympathy to Mike and all of your family. Carol was a wonderful friend and we were very fortunate to have known and spent time with her and her family . We have many fond memories of the times spent together, playing cards, show , the family volleyball get togethers, ladies club and especially the grand tour on our trip to Florida. She was a joy to know. Our thoughts and prayers for all the family.

Larry & Edna Jirak - October 01, 2014 at 12:00 AM

JJ

“ Mike, Eric, Jennifer, Andrea and Kate you are in our prayers and thoughts today. We would have enjoyed your celebration of Carol's life but distance and illness wouldn't allow. We will always remember the fun we had playing cards with both of you Mike. The jokes told on those card club nights were the best! We are so sorry for your loss of wife, Mom, and Grandma.

Jim and Sue Jensen - October 01, 2014 at 12:00 AM

VM

“ Hi Graham family So sorry to hear about Carol I know it must be difficult for all of you My prayers are with you all. The Saude bunch is getting smaller all the time. Trust in God to help you through this time Love Verlene

Verlene Maher - October 01, 2014 at 12:00 AM

CM

“ Mike and Family Words cannot express how sorry we are for your loss and ours. Carol was an exceptional woman and an inspiration to many people. She was our neighbor, friend and a member of our family here in Florida. We loved her and will miss her. Our deepest sympathies, Carol and John.

Carol and John McCurnin - October 01, 2014 at 12:00 AM

JA

“ To Mike and Carol's family - How can someone with such a zest for life no longer be with us? I'm sure that Carol is encouraging the best in others in heaven. Carol was an extraordinary woman who lived an extraordinary life and her legacy will live on in the people with whom she touched - both family and friends. My sincere condolences are sent to her family.

Janet - October 01, 2014 at 12:00 AM

PB

“ Please accept our most heartfelt sympathies for your loss. Our thoughts are with you and your family during this difficult time.

Patti & Denny Byrne - October 01, 2014 at 12:00 AM

BR

“ Carol has been an inspiration to all the neighbors in the Village based on her enthusiasm for life. May we all share her passion and courage.

Bob and Kitty Rupp - October 01, 2014 at 12:00 AM



“ Carol Graham

October 01, 2014 at 12:00 AM