



Gloria Joyce Signer

April 23, 1925 - September 6, 2017

Joyce Signer, 92, of Corvallis, passed away Sept. 6, 2017, on what would have been her 70th wedding anniversary. She had suffered a general decline following a fall in early June.

Gloria Joyce Watson, the only child of Hazel and Wilfred Watson, was born April 23, 1925, in Portland. As a young girl, Joyce played the accordion and was a member of the Young Oregonians, a musical performance group. She graduated from Commerce (now Cleveland) High School, and then attended Oregon State College (now OSU), graduating in 1947 with a Bachelor of Science in Education. She was a member of Kappa Alpha Theta Sorority, where friendships made lasted a lifetime. It was at Oregon State where she met her future husband, Richard “Dick” Signer, whom she married on Sept. 6, 1947.

After a brief two-year stint as a high school teacher, Joyce turned her attention toward motherhood with the birth of her son Don in 1951 and then daughter Janet in 1952. Due to transfers by Dick’s employer, General Motors, the Signer family moved from Portland to Spokane, WA, then to Bellevue, WA, where daughter Jeanine was born in 1960. A 1961 transfer took the family to Los Altos, CA. In 1965, Dick left GM for a move to Corvallis, where he and Joyce bought the Dodge dealership, opening as Signer Motors in August.

Joyce remained a stay-at-home mom through 1970, when Dick passed away suddenly of a heart attack in December, just three weeks after purchasing the Buick-Cadillac-GMC-Jeep dealership in Corvallis. As Don had worked at the Dodge dealership since its opening in 1965, and planned to take over the GM-Jeep dealership one day, Joyce decided to pursue keeping it. With encouragement and support from long-time family friend and auto dealer Chuck Wentworth, Joyce took on the challenge to become one of the nation's first woman auto dealers. In 1983, she was honored as Oregon's Time Magazine Quality Dealer.

Joyce became increasingly involved with, and gave back to, the Corvallis community she loved and embraced. She served on numerous community committees and boards of directors, including Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center, and various OSU boards, with College of Business and Alumni Association among them. She was a 50-year member of Grace Lutheran Church, as well as a long-time member of the Rotary Club of Corvallis. And, she was an avid OSU Beaver supporter, holding football and basketball season tickets for nearly five decades.

One of Joyce's loves was traveling, something she did extensively. As a child, she dreamed of seeing the world; a goal she achieved.

Joyce will be remembered as a ground-breaking woman business owner who inspired other women who followed in her path. She was preceded in death by husband Dick in 1970, and companion of twenty years, Howard Trachsel, in 2015. She is survived by her three children; Don, of Fremont, California, Janet Muller of Keizer, and Jeanine Garrett (Glenn) of Portland. She is also survived by four grandchildren; Rick Muller, Grady Garrett, Taylor Garrett and Christy Garrett, as well as the family of Joyce's cousin, Violet Thomas.

The Signer family would like to thank the caregivers and staff at Timberhill

Place for the wonderful care they gave their mother. Also, words cannot express the gratitude the family has for everybody at Benton Hospice for the extraordinary attention and support provided to their mother in her final weeks.

A family graveside service was held on September 15th. The Signer family invites those who knew Joyce to a Celebration of Life at Corvallis Country Club on Sunday, October 15th, beginning at 3:00. A tribute to her life will begin at 3:45.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations be made to Benton Hospice or Grace Lutheran Church.

Tribute Wall



“ For a number of years Joyce would have me help her create her Christmas Card which she had so much fun doing, in essence, poking fun at herself. And she enjoyed the thought of what the recipients would think of her cards. And she'd share how her year had gone, the most memorable the year a tree fell on her house and a number of other things I can't even remember now, just the challenges of growing older.

Paul Rentz - January 20, 2018 at 12:11 PM

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“ I was able to work for Joyce for 11 years as a parts manager, from 1992-2003 and it was a wonderful 11years. She was a great employer and a wonderful all around person. She was highly thought of in the community and very well respected. I am in deed grateful to have gotten to know and respect Joyce and have a special spot in my heart for her. She was always generous in sharing her tickets to the OSU beavers games, football and basketball and my kids and I welcomed the chance to go to the games, when the opportunity came along. That is what really got us supporting the beavers for all of these years. Even though most of us don't live in Oregon anymore, we continue to watch and listen to the beavers from Utah and go to the games when they come here to play.

Joyce will be missed, but know that she will not be forgotten. Our sincere best wishes go to her family and know that our family loved her too. Sincerely Bob Crow.

Robert Crow - October 08, 2017 at 05:29 PM

TO

“ Terry Van Orman lit a candle in memory of
Gloria Joyce Signer



terry van orman - October 06, 2017 at 01:53 PM