



Mary Dean Snelling

December 21, 1941 - January 4, 2024

Mary Dean (Bower) Snelling

21 December 1941 – 4 January 2024

Mary Dean passed away at home in the presence of husband John. Visits from children, brother and friends were very special in the weeks prior to her death. She was at peace with mostly good days since her diagnosis in September 2022.

Born in Los Angeles, Mary Dean grew up in Pasadena, California, the daughter of Lois Gertrude (French) and Ernest C. Bower. Avid environmentalists, hikers and campers, with love of nature and outdoors, the Bowers, including Mary Dean's brother Mark, spent most weekends car camping in southern California, and vacationing in the southwest. The Bowers were sometimes the only non-indigenous spectators at special Native American festivals. A special memory is her Girl Scout troop's travel to Mexico. There, a pair of girls stayed with a Mexican family every other night as they headed to Mexico City by bus driven by an L.A. fireman who was also a school bus driver.

Mary Dean graduated from Pasadena High School in 1959 in a ceremony held in the Rose Bowl, and Pomona College in 1963, with a degree in

Zoology. She met her husband of 59 years, John Craig Snelling (Claremont Men's College) at the Kerckhoff Marine Lab in Corona del Mar in summer 1962. John's love was instantaneous. Both were enrolled in Marine Science classes taught by Dr. Wheeler North, an expert in giant kelp.

She graduated from University of Southern California in secondary education with a science specialty in 1964. Marriage to John in Pasadena followed, then honeymoon in Mexico; Mary Dean's second choice as she had never been to Hawaii.

Mary Dean and John moved to Wisconsin the fall after marriage where he studied blackbirds at University of Wisconsin. They enjoyed skating on the lakes in winter and canoeing in summer. She worked as a teacher at a state institution for children with disabilities.

In 1966, Mary Dean and John moved to upstate New York for additional graduate study at Cornell University. Mary Dean finished a Library Science Master's degree at Syracuse University. She also worked as an elementary school teacher for children with disabilities. In July 1967 a dream assignment came to study eagles in Kruger National Park, Republic of South Africa. Mary Dean was John's primary research assistant, even after son Brad was born in June 1968. The wildlife was spectacular, new friends were made, even while the three Snellings lived in a 14-foot trailer! Following Africa in 1969, son Derek was born in Dryden, New York. Shortly after, Mary Dean spent many hours helping John nurse a sick Lanner falcon to recovery. Mary Dean also worked briefly in the local library.

A move to Edmond Oklahoma followed in 1973. Mary Dean was librarian at Chisholm elementary school. John curated at the Zoo and taught part time in local higher and secondary education. They adopted Jenny in 1974 from a Korean agency in Tulsa, a guaranteed sister to the boys. Mary Dean

continued her love of education with classes in Computer Science at Central Oklahoma University.

In 1985 the family moved to Corvallis, Oregon, where John was Assistant Professor of Military Science (Army) at Oregon State University. After jobs at Western Oregon University and Lebanon Schools Mary Dean found a job as a media specialist at Corvallis High School, where she worked until her retirement.

Active in the Corvallis Sister Cities relationship with Uzhhorod, Ukraine, Mary Dean wrote grants for and directed the first youth exchange with our Ukrainian partner.

Genealogy interests took her on numerous trips to Germany and a few to Ireland. A six-day camel trek around Tunisia, led by a German cousin, with a dozen other German women was a delight. She rode and walked leading a camel many a mile, over dune after dune.

There was also Mary Dean's unforgettable trip to Thailand with a Thai friend whom Mary Dean and John hosted as a student at Central Oklahoma University years ago.

Mary Dean is survived by husband, John Craig Snelling, brother, Mark Jesse Bower, and children Brad Snelling, Derek Snelling, Jenny Arnot, and eight grandchildren. She is sorely missed and loved by all.

At her wishes no formal service is planned. The family will gather for a reunion later. Donations in Mary Dean's name may be made to the Corvallis Benton County Friends of the Library

Please share your thoughts and memories for the family at www.McHenryFuneralHome.com.

Tribute Wall

CW

“ I remember Mary Dean from when I substitute taught at CHS. I also knew her from Linn Co Genealogy Society. She and I had fun together.

Carolyn Webb - February 12, 2024 at 06:40 PM

MM

“ I was sad to hear of Mary Dean's passing. I met her in the OSU Folk Club and we enjoyed sharing stories about our pasts as we had a lot in common. She majored in zoology, as did I, and we lived in the same places, i.e. Syracuse, NY, Oklahoma, and in a game reserve in Africa, albeit at different times. She was such a bright, knowledgeable woman who cared about the world and helped make it a better place. I will miss her.

Mary Ann Matzke - February 01, 2024 at 09:00 PM

KS

“ I've known MarvDean for 30 some years. I had her daughter in class and met her then. We both ended our careers in the district in the world of libraries. Such a soft spoken, sweet lady.

Karen Steele - January 22, 2024 at 08:15 PM

AR

“ Mary Dean served on the first Board of Directors for Corvallis Sister Cities Association. She was knowledgeable about so many things from working with children with disabilities to the outdoors to library science to just having a desire to serve and make the world better. She accomplished that and so many other things with her expertise and dedication. She will be missed.
Alice and Mark Rampton

Alice and Mark Rampton - January 19, 2024 at 03:23 PM



“ *A sympathy card was purchased for the family of Mary Dean Snelling.* ”



January 18, 2024 at 10:29 AM