



Janet Ariel Wheeler

February 15, 1929 - October 3, 2020

Janet Ariel Smith Wheeler was born at Lutheran Hospital in Minneapolis, Minnesota on February 15, 1929 to Keith Joseph Smith and Barbara Gretchen Marston Smith. She passed away peacefully at the age of 91, with family around her, on October 3, 2020. Janet had two younger sisters, Amber Wallace and Carol Gunn. Janet's childhood was spent living in various state parks while her father worked for the Works Progress Administration as a landscape architect, helping plan state parks across Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, and Texas. They had to move so often, they finally had a 24-foot trailer made to order for their family home. Janet's childhood was spent in the snowy north and she had fond memories of ice skating, sledding, and skiing on homemade skis. One of her most vivid memories was spending the winter in a summer cabin in the woods of Minnesota and how it was so cold they heated bricks on the woodstove to take to bed at night. They were living in their trailer on the beach near Galveston, Texas when a hurricane hit. They had to evacuate and leave everything behind. When they could return, they could only access it by boat. There was a lot of water damage, but the trailer survived.

Several years were spent living in Postville, Iowa with Aunt Florence Marston Roberts, so Janet and Amber could attend school regularly. Aunt Florence was a great stabilizing force in a chaotic home life and that is where the family retreated often for holidays and vacations.

Janet attended schools in New London and Hinkley, Minnesota; Hampton and Postville, Iowa; Rolla, Waynesville, and Blue Springs, Missouri; and Alvin, Camp Chemical, and Friendswood, Texas. After changing schools so very often, she was able to attend all of high school in Friendswood, Texas before going on to Friends University in Wichita, Kansas, where she met and married Lyle Wheeler, before graduating with a degree in Home Economics.

Lyle and Janet felt called to the mission field and applied to Mid-America Yearly Meeting (then Kansas Yearly Meeting) for an assignment. While they waited for a placement they moved to Pratt, Kansas and taught at the Friends Academy (now Barclay College) in Haviland, Kansas. Janet taught Home Ec, typing and shorthand, and PE. Lyle taught shop, math, and science. When they got the go ahead to study French in Brussels, Belgium in preparation for ministry in Burundi, Africa, they were already pregnant with

their first daughter, Lynette Marie. Lynette was born in Brussels on September 27, 1957. Janelle was born in Kampala, Africa two years later on December 14, 1959. Janet's Home Ec education served her well as she presided over an African home full of visitors and taught an African cook how to feed her family and an African housekeeper how to keep house. She also sewed nearly all their clothes and taught sewing classes. Keeping house in a third world country drew on all of Janet's gifts of thriftiness, resourcefulness, recycling, and making do. She also homeschooled Lynette and Janelle for several years before sending them off to Mweya to attend the boarding school there. She never complained about the extra work and enjoyed camping and travelling around Central Africa with her little family.

Barbara was born in Wichita, Kansas while they were on furlough in 1963. They went back to Africa for one more term, but the political situation was heating up in the mid-60s and Lynette was old enough to go to the mission school in Kenya, so they decided to stay in the United States after that term. They lived a year in Wichita and then a year in Hutchinson, where Janet taught Home Economics at Central Christian High School, before moving to Dodge City, Kansas, where they stayed six years. Janet spent those six years doing alterations at home and at several clothing stores, often walking all the way downtown to work so the girls could drive the car to school. She was always active in church women's groups, praying and doing ministry. It was her main source of social connectedness and the house was always open for any guests that Lyle wanted to bring home. Sunday evenings were fun times to invite people over for ice cream and the girls' friends were always welcome at any meal or to stay the night.

Summers were busy with all the girls going to Camp Quaker Haven. Janet often went with one of them and volunteered in the kitchen, while Aunt Zetta Kinser went with the other age group to volunteer and whichever cousin, Doris or Nadine, stayed at Janet's house for the week her mom was gone. It was a grand arrangement that kept the cousins close. Another summer tradition was a couple of weeks in Arkansas to visit Janet's parents and the cousins there. Those trips and the accompanying camping trips into the Ozarks were highlights of the year. Janet somehow kept everyone fed and organized.

Lyle was working for the state as a vocational rehabilitation counselor and got transferred back to Hutchinson in 1976. They bought a three-bedroom ranch, Janet's first time keeping house in a newer home. She enjoyed being nearer Kinser and Wheeler family and they lived there until moving to Pratt again in the early 80s. When the youngest daughters graduated and moved out west, Lyle and Janet enjoyed taking road trips out to visit, often taking trips to the Oregon coast, and staying with friends along the way. Lyle retired from Kansas Voc Rehab in 1998, and they moved to Oregon to be near Barbara and Janelle's families. Janet continued to keep house and sew for family and others and love on her grandkids.

Janet spent her later years living in Friendsview Manor in Newberg, Oregon and enjoying

the company of friends from their years in Burundi and western Kansas. She joined prayer groups and worked with Gideons as long as she could. She lost a lot of short-term memory, but never stopped being the humble, grateful, resourceful woman she had always been. Her love for Jesus and family lit up her face until the end.

She was preceded in death by her parents, her sister Amber Wallace, and her daughter Lynette Wheeler Koehn. She is survived by her husband, Lyle, her daughters, Janelle (Joseph) Olivarez and Barbara (Jerry) Mann, her son-in-law Mark Koehn, and her sister Carol Gunn. She also leaves behind six grandchildren, Taylor Townsend Crevola, Landon and Kendall Townsend, Micah and Rachel Mann, and Seth Lincoln Koehn.

No service is planned due to the novel corona virus, but a memorial slideshow can be accessed at https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/15BYTuvH4Qd3-yll6OwE9oLrmo_eXxC_yUpx5de2PaY8/edit?usp=sharing.

Memorial contributions can be made to Barclay College at barclaycollege.edu/give/.

Arrangements by Attrell's Funeral Chapels.

Comments



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Attrell's Newberg Funeral Chapel - October 13 at 01:26 PM



“ 10 files added to the album Janet's life



Janelle Olivarez - October 12 at 04:36 PM



“ Here is a link to the slideshow we made for Janet's memorial.

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/15BYTuvH4Qd3-ylI6OwE9oLrmo_eXxC_yUpx5de2PaY8/edit?usp=sharing

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Janelle Olivarez - October 12 at 04:31 PM