



Jean Shutes

August 7, 1923 - January 8, 2018

Marjorie Jean Shutes was born August 7, 1923 in the small rural town of Three Rivers, Michigan to J. Leo and Florence (Edgerton) McDonald. Her father was a farmer, auctioneer and a handyman. Her mother was a schoolteacher. Jean was the third oldest of seven children including three sisters, Miriam, Marguerite, and Marie, and three brothers, Robert (Bob), Hubert, and Paul Edward, of whom Marie and Hubert are surviving.

Jean graduated from Three Rivers High School in 1940 as salutatorian of her class then worked for several employers in Three Rivers. During WWII, she carried on correspondence with a number of acquaintances deployed in the services. Bristol Shutes, who had been a classmate and neighbor was one of those soldiers. Jean and Bristol's correspondence and her support during his convalescence from war injuries blossomed into a loving and devoted relationship. The two wed on June 27, 1948 in a small ceremony in Jean's family home.

Following Bristol's graduation from Olivet College in 1949, they moved to Vicksburg, Michigan where Bristol taught high school. In 1955 they purchased a very small house on Indian Lake, where Jean lived until she passed. At the lake, Jean and Bristol raised two sons, David and Daniel, both proud recipients of the work ethic and moral fiber of their parents. The small house was enlarged through several remodels, and that house became a home under Jean's constant influence. Meals were on a schedule and the conversation that took place over good food usually included an accounting of the day's happenings by all. The fine balance of "let boys be boys" and responsible guidance was one of her most enduring accomplishments.

When the boys reached school age, Jean became actively involved in their education and school activities. Jean was a frequent "room mother" and chaperone for school activities and field trips. She carefully influenced choices of teacher, never missed teacher conferences, and participated in PTA.

Jean's deep interest and participation in education led her to start a career in Vicksburg's school administration office. Her job description evolved over the years and included general clerical, bookkeeping, payroll, and bus route logistics. Many lasting friendships resulted from the dedicated work and communication skills honed in those years.

After retiring from the Vicksburg school system, Jean worked for Brady Township serving as township Treasurer. Her job was a great fit for her acquired bookkeeping and communication skills. She loved the job and eventually moved to the Township Clerk position and mentored her successor in the Treasurer position.

For Jean, it was always important to have a plan and understanding of guidelines for any undertaking. It was important to follow procedures exactly. The operation of the township was no exception. She was diligent in making sure things were done "right." She would reach out to other townships for helpful suggestions and new ideas. She would hold herself and others accountable for their job responsibilities and performance. Jean would do all this with a smiling and feisty personality so things were done right. If not done right, there would be a "mell of a hess", as she would call it.

Jean was always involved with church of the Christian faith. Her sons remember in the late 50's and early 60's, shining their shoes and dressing up with bow ties to go to Sunday service and see their mom sing in the choir. Membership moved through several churches over the years and included a long stint at Lakeland Reformed Church, where Jean and Bristol were actively involved with church publications and activities. Many more long-term friendships sprung from that involvement.

Jean's longest and most endearing work was her thirty plus years of providing care to her husband Bristol who was struck down with a paralyzing stroke at the age of 56. Jean identified and organized field trips for the "stroke club", traveling throughout SW Michigan. In later years, she drove daily for a period of over three years to the nursing home, spending days with Bristol.

Jean's fondest memories of her later years included her 90th birthday party. All the best things in her life were represented. Homemade ice cream, friends from all walks of life, family, and singing around the piano played expertly by a longtime friend. Other favorite memories were of simple gatherings around her dining room table at the lake, sharing snacks and goodies while playing any one of a number of games. Pinochle, double deck hearts, Skipbo, Balderdash, chicken's feet, and kings-on-the-corner were some of the games enjoyed by dear friends and family.

Jean will be interred alongside her late husband Bristol's grave in a small graveside ceremony for immediate family and close friends at Riverside Cemetery in Three Rivers Michigan 11:00 a.m. April 21, 2018. A lunch will follow at Moore Park Community Church 55701 Wilbur Rd in Three Rivers. The family encourages those who would offer a memorial offering to consider local organizations shared or attended with Jean or the Vicksburg Historical Society or the Vicksburg Performing Arts Center.

Jean is survived by two sons and their wives, David Shutes and Kathy (Larson) and Daniel and Jill (Ketchum) Shutes, five grandchildren, ten great grandchildren and numerous nephews, nieces, grand nephews and grand nieces and many great grand nephews and nieces. Jean's computer screen saver, her refrigerator door, mantle and many shelves filled with pictures provide a telling testimony to the role of her extended family in her day-to-day life. She is missed.