



*Dorothy Jean Forhan
Berry (Jean)*

May 11, 1930 - May 28, 2023

Dorothy Jean Forhan Berry (Jean), 93, of Morganton NC died Sunday, May 28, 2023 at Grace Ridge Retirement Community after two years of declining health. Jean was a loving mother, grandmother and great grandmother who delighted in seeing her family succeed in all their various pursuits.

Jean was born on May 11, 1930 in Detroit Michigan to the late Marie Loranger Forhan and Wilfred Allen Forhan. When she was five years old the family relocated to Fort Lauderdale, Florida where she lived until graduating high school and leaving to attend Florida State University in Tallahassee. Jean majored in Physical Education with a concentration in dance and she excelled as a competitive swimmer. It was at FSU where she discovered Modern Dance which became a lifelong passion. She was chosen by her dance instructor to be a participant in a dance workshop run by the renowned Martha Graham in New York City for two summers during her college years.

Upon graduation Jean accepted a position at Alabama College in Montevallo, Alabama teaching dance and coaching the swim team. It is here where Jean

discovered another passion of her life, her husband, Lewis Berry. When Jean and Lew met they both were engaged to others but their instant love for one another could not be denied. The couple married in 1953 and moved to Greensboro, NC so Lew could pursue graduate studies in Art at UNC-G. As their family began to grow they moved to Morganton in 1958 where Lew began employment at Henredon Industries and they raised their 3 children. During these years Jean had various pursuits including teaching dance and other PE classes at Western Piedmont Community College, developing and leading creative movement workshops at NC School for the Deaf and the Iverson Riddle Developmental Center. In the 1980s, Jean earned her Masters Degree in Counseling at ASU in Boone and spent many years helping others navigate difficulties in their lives or simply helping them learn more about themselves.

Jean explored the world around her through movement whether it be dance, yoga, swimming or simply walking in nature. With her young family, long camping trips were made to New England, Wyoming and Florida and endless hours were spent snow skiing, horseback riding, and hiking. She and Lew took ski trips to the Western ski resorts and several trips to Europe enjoying Greece, England, France and Italy. Beyond the age of ninety, she was often seen walking the local Greenway along the Catawba river. Up until her last few months of life she kept up a weekly yoga practice.

Jean was an active member of Grace Episcopal Church where she spent many years singing in the choir. She also participated as a lay reader and worked with the youth group. In the 1990s she completed the Education for Ministries course and became a lay minister for the Episcopal Church. With this training she was able to care for the congregation, lead small groups and establish community outreach ministries as part of Grace church's ministry team under the supervision of the clergy.

Surviving are son Christopher Berry (Cesanne) of Durham, NC, daughter Melinda Berry of Greensboro, NC, daughter Martha Uberseder (Lance) of McLeansville, NC, grandchildren Paige Berry (Michael Montgomery), Lauren Berry (Sean O'Brien) both of Longmont, CO, Brynn Torress (Zachary) of Hollywood, CA, Stefan Uberseder (Rafaella Garros) of Denver, CO and Alexa Uberseder (Aaron Ollivier) of Mancos, CO. Jean also is survived by 3 great grandchildren.

A Service of Remembrance will be held at Grace Episcopal Church on Saturday, October 7, 2023 at 11 am. Memorial contributions may be made to Blue Ridge Healthcare Foundation Endowment Fund or Enhancement Fund to benefit programs at Grace Ridge Retirement Community, or to Grace Episcopal Church.

Sossoman Funeral Home and Crematory Center is assisting the family with the arrangements.

Tribute Wall

There will never be another like her! I am so proud to have loved her for many years. Soar high!!!

–Betsy Blatz

Oh, how I loved your mom! I have known her forever and she was such a wonderful beautiful friend to my mom, Bobby UNDERwood. She was so so so good to my mom when my mom moved to Grace Ridge. I've talk to Jean every few months since my mom died, and how brave she was, and very Jean Berry-like to decide to stop the chemo and to be more in charge of her earthly end!!!! I very much hope I will be able to come to her service to grieve for her and celebrate her!! Love to you, Chris, Melinda and Martha!!

–Marie Riggs

So sorry to hear of your loss. You're Mom was a wonderful, upbeat, and fun person to be around. Thinking of you all at this difficult time.

–Dovie McBrayer

Jean participated in my yoga class for many years! I had so many Jean's in my class, so I called her Jean Jean the dancing machine! I will miss you Jean and your crazy dance moves!

–Karin P Novak



Sorry to hear about Jean she always had a smile and was kind to people. Gayle Frye

–Betty Gayle Howell Frye

I believe Mrs Berry was a friend of Jim & Avie Patton in the late 50's-early 60's. You have my sincere sympathy. I apologize if I have the wrong family.

–Lori Patton

The Grace Ridge Retirement Community sends condolences to Jean's family and friends. Ms. Berry was a remarkable person who touched many lives. She was always kind and supportive to others and will always have a special place in our hearts.

–Lisa Miller