



Mary Louise Gechter

January 3, 1940 - January 24, 2021

It is with heavy hearts we share that Mary Louise Wright Gechter went to her heavenly home on January 24, 2021 after a recent diagnosis of Lymphoma and a longer battle with Lewy Body Dementia.

Mary was born in a house in Lead, South Dakota on January 3, 1940, during a blizzard. Her family moved 2 years later to Milwaukie, Oregon. There Mary was surrounded by many aunts, uncles, and over 50 cousins. She was the majorette at Milwaukie High School. When Mary was 16, she moved to San Diego, where she graduated from Point Loma High School. A few months later, at a ballroom dancing class at San Diego City College, she met Joe. They were soon engaged. Mary often told the story that they went to the movie South Pacific, and then Joe proposed next to the monkey cages at the San Diego Zoo. Joe and Mary were married on November 27, 1959. Mary worked at Kettenberg Boat Works while Joe studied to get his Engineering degree at SDSU. Joe and Mary's first son, Jay, was born in 1963, followed by Glenn in 1965. They were very involved in Palisades Presbyterian Church and enjoyed many fun adventures with other young families. In 1974, the family of four moved to Santa Barbara. They became members of Grace Church, where the Gechters made more lifelong friends. They were quite surprised in December of 1975 when twin girls arrived! When Jan and Jean were born, the pastor told the church congregation, "Mary and Joseph just had twins!"

Mary was actively involved in her children's classrooms and sports activities, often serving as room mother, field trip driver, and team mom. She was also president of the Santa Barbara Chapter of the Mothers of Twins Club and was a Sunday School teacher for many years. Mary was more than a mother to just her four biological children. Friends, relatives, and international students fondly remember Mary as their "second mom or grandmother." The doors of the Gechter home were always open and the house was regularly full of teenagers and young adults playing pool, stopping by before they went to the beach, or joining family meals. Mary greatly enjoyed being a grandmother and aunt. She would spend hours playing with the children, singing to them, or rocking them to sleep. Mary always loved to crack a joke, tell a detailed story from her past, breakout into song, or listen as one of her kids told an anecdote from their childhood. Mary's favorite treats were Queen Anne cordial cherries and when Joe would bring her a burger from In and Out. She

loved pink carnations, and she enjoyed watching the hummingbirds visit outside her window.

She is survived by her husband of 61 years, Joe Gechter; her brother, Timothy Wright; her four children and their spouses, Jay and Rosie Gechter, Glenn and Sara Gechter, Matthew and Jan Mussallem, and Nathan and Jean Jorden; her seven grandchildren, Beverly, Hannah, Rebecca, Josiah, Tyler, Connor and Andrew; and countless other family and friends who called her Mom, Aunt, or Grandma. Mary is preceded in death by her sister, Lois (Wright) Grooman, and parents John and Rhoda Wright.

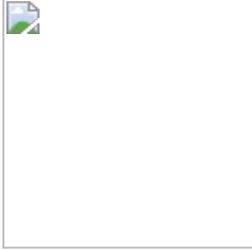
A small private celebration of Mary's life will be held on the Grace Hall patio at Shoreline Community Church on 2/6/21 at 12:00 pm PST. Due to the limited size of the memorial service, please join us live via Zoom at: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82570213183> Meeting ID: 825 7021 3183 Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kdT3xEsaTJ> We invite you to leave a message, memory, pictures, or a video for the family on this site on Mary's obituary tribute wall.

The Gechter family would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the staff of Valle Verde for making Mary feel a part of your family, as she did for so many others in her life. In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to the Valle Verde Employee Appreciation Fund at: <https://www.humangoodfoundation.org/ways-to-give/make-a-gift/>. Please designate "Valle Verde" and "Employee Assistance" to honor the staff that gave Mary such exceptional care.

Comments



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Joe Gechter - February 07 at 01:12 PM



“ I think with Christopher Plummer passing Mom is up there singing Edelweiss with him. Thanks to my siblings for organizing a great memorial service and thanks for all the kind words from all! -Glenn

Glenn Gechter - February 06 at 10:38 PM



“ 3 files added to the tribute wall



Ronit Barrett - February 06 at 04:20 PM



“ Aunt Mary was such a special person in my life. She always made me feel like she loved me like I was her niece – not just Joe’s niece. She was always interested in what we were doing because she cared and she wanted to share in the fun. Spending a few weeks in her home in Santa Barbara every summer was one of the highlights of my year as a kid. Aunt Mary would drive us to the bead store and the mall and would happily put up with Jan and Jean and my endless rehearsals for our “Swing the Mood” lip-synch concerts. (I’m talking about very loud, very long rehearsals, every day for two weeks.) And our family trips to water ski at Lake Nacimiento were so much fun. When I came to Santa Barbara for college she was always so gracious and welcoming and easy to talk to and be with. And anytime I came to do my laundry she would make that lasagna!!! I know we are all proud of who she was to us - Wife, Mom, Grandma, Sister, Cousin, Aunt, or friend. She was a beautiful person and that was a beautiful memorial service. I wish I could be there in person to hug and cry and laugh with you. (PS Jay looks young and all the grandkids look old!)

Ronit Barrett - February 06 at 04:15 PM



“ Thanks, Ronit!!!!

jeanjorden - February 07 at 09:49 AM



“ Dear Joe and family, Mary was an incredibly loving and special person. My memories of her revolve around her obvious love of her family, the way she loved to sing and her wonderful and sparkling sense of humor and kindness. She was always up to sing, especially favorites like "Always" and "What the World Needs Now." Her eyes lit up when she talked about her family and when you all would come and share family dinners with her. She was so proud of each of her children and grandchildren. I loved hearing her tell the story of when she met, you, Joe, and how you proposed. She brought such love to everything she did and everyone she met. Although I only knew for a brief time, I will never forget Mary and the things I learned from her. And I treasure having met each of you. Love to you all as you find your way and celebrate her. Laura DeHaven

Laura DeHaven - February 05 at 11:06 PM



“ My second mother Mary. You are my important person in my life. I've never forgotten the days I spent with Mary for 26 years. You came to school for my graduation ceremony when the language school was over for all course. I was really happy. When I got home from school, you often took me to the market. I used to laugh a lot in the car with the smell of skunk. The lasagna made by Mary will never be forgotten. I tried to make it, but I couldn't reach that impression. I'm really glad I went to see my family five years ago. I wanted to see Mary again, but thank you for all the memories.

Reiko Yamamoto - January 29 at 10:10 AM



“ Thank you, Reiko!

Jean Jorden - January 30 at 04:54 PM



“ Janice L Whitaker lit a candle in memory of Mary Louise Gechter



Janice L Whitaker - January 28 at 02:17 PM



“ Since I just read that pink carnations were her favorite, here's a pretty little candle in Mary's memory.

Janice L Whitaker - January 28 at 02:18 PM



“ Mary sweet Mary! I have years of memories. From the time I was in a Christmas evening concert at church and Pastor got up and made an announcement that Joseph and Mary just delivered twins, Mary teaching me several of her special dishes she made, having Thanksgiving dinner as families together for several years in a row, remembering her as she had the patience of a saint, her smile, when we moved she would send me bulletins for about 1 year after so I could keep up on what was going on. When I first got out of Cosmetology school, she was my model for a certain kind of haircut and ever since she wore it like that. Mary knew how to be a friend. She gave graciously and accepted graciously. Mary, you will live on in these memories. I love you dear friend!

Janice L Whitaker - January 28 at 02:11 PM



“ Thank you so much! I didn't know she used to send you bulletins. You were such a great friend to her!!!

Jean Jorden - January 28 at 06:48 PM



“ Mary was a wonderful and generous person. When she came into my classroom she always had a big smile on her face and was willing to do anything I requested. Her enthusiasm for life was infectious, so I really enjoyed being around her. She will be sorely missed by all who knew and loved her. I am so sorry for your loss.
Rita Levin

Rita Levin - January 28 at 01:34 PM



“ Thank you so much!

Jean Jorden - January 28 at 01:39 PM



“ So sorry to hear of Mary's passing. I knew her through the Mother's of Twins Club (that is was known as in those days). She was always calm, helpful, and welcoming to a newcomer like I was. Lots of great MOT Club meeting memories. Thank you, Mary, for that.

Marsha Hill

Marsha Hill - January 30 at 04:47 PM



“ Thank you, Marsha!

Jean Jorden - January 30 at 04:56 PM



“ We came to know Mary through our daughter-in-law, Jan. I remember meeting her and Joe for the first time at the parent meeting for Physical Therapy students at the UW-LaCrosse, WI. Matt and Jan had met through that program. We have subsequently met many of the Gechter family and have enjoyed the warmth of the family at these gatherings. How wonderful that all of you were able to celebrate Mary's 81st birthday with her. What a gift to celebrate a life well-lived! God Speed. Lyn and Bob Mussallem

Lyn and Bob Mussallem - February 04 at 06:38 PM



“ Lyn & Bob

So glad to have you as part of our family.

Hugs

Joe

Joe Gechter - February 07 at 01:06 PM