



Jean L. Thornhill

September 27, 2021

Jean L. Thornhill, more fondly known as “Queen Jean,” passed away peacefully on September 27, 2021, wearing her tiara and with her cherished family surrounding her.

In April, the family had lovingly honored her with a royal celebration for her 90th birthday. While her mind and spirit remained strong, her body could no longer fight complications following cancer surgery.

Born and raised by Helen and Perry Wright in Marengo, IL, Jean was the youngest of four daughters. She didn’t travel far to find her mate. In December she and her husband, Jerry Thornhill, longtime residents of Hampshire, IL, would have celebrated 70 years of marriage. They created a beautiful family of five daughters and enjoyed an amazing, active, and adventurous life together.

Jean was a leader, a role model, and a remarkably caring person who left a profound legacy. Always being the one to host family/friend gatherings (often with a crazy skit or theme), she sent 150 cards annually for birthdays and anniversaries. Creative and talented, she delighted many with clever verses commemorating special events or found tucked in with a gift. She helped establish Camp Fire Girls in Hampshire, sang in the church choir and could be seen on the St. Charles Borromeo “Kitchen Band” parade float sporting a hat

with dangling kitchen utensils and playing her kazoo.

A successful AVON lady for 30 years, she loved dressing up and showing the ladies in town new scents and jewelry. Wife of the Hampshire Mayor, her popularity no doubt helped swing the election. A member of Woman's Club, she would often provide the program, regaling members with their travels to New Zealand, Germany, or Alaska, or showing them her vast shell collection.

Jean loved the beach and had a true zest for life. She gave her five daughters the gift of an annual Mother/Daughter Cruise where so many cherished and fabulous memories were made – a gondola ride in Venice, the Vatican in Rome, and snorkeling off Buck Island, St. Croix. Facebook exploded with postings of her parasailing over St. Thomas at 86, and again on Bonita Beach, FL only five months ago! at 90, and ziplining in the Dominican Republic at 88. With a beautiful unstoppable spirit, she was always ready for more. It was easy to forget she was legally blind with macular degeneration, especially as she remained an avid reader with the help of “playaway” books.

With amazing longevity in her family, Jean is survived by her husband Jerry Thornhill (90) and her sister, Doris McNeese (100 in December). She leaves her five daughters Gail Thornhill, Susan Thornhill, Denise (Bill) Gower, Kathy (Rick) Hemphill and Marsha (Dickie) Wood along with five grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

A celebration of Jean's life will be held at the First Baptist Church in Marengo, IL, on Saturday, December 4 at 11 a.m. with a luncheon reception following. All are welcome. For safety, masks will be required.

The family would love to hear any stories about Jean that you may wish to share. The family requests no flowers.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

DEC 4. 11:00 AM (CT)

First Baptist Church
320 E. Washington St
Marengo, IL 60152
(815) 568-8830

Tribute Wall

DS

“ *What a great lady, and a great cook. I remember being at the house and she had just made sugar cookies and they were delicious! She even gave me the recipe and I still have it.*
Diane Tegtman-Schiffer

Diane Schiffer - November 04, 2021 at 03:24 PM

MR

“ *So sorry to learn of your Mother's passing, she was very strong lady and leader of many, showing strength in all that she did! My fondest memory has to be all the time we spent sharing thoughts, ideas, etc, when she would come to my home on her monthly AVON visits!! She was such a kind, thoughtful and caring Mom to her "5" beautiful daughters!*
She will be missed, but your beautiful memories of her will stay in your hearts forever and help you to cope. My best to you all, give your Dad a hug from me, GOD BLESS!!

Mary (Ellett) Roberts

MARY ROBERTS - November 01, 2021 at 02:44 PM

ST

“ You were the best Mom the 5 “T Girls” could possibly have had. You taught us through example how to be caring, loving, competent, strong women who cherish family and who love to have fun. The Mother/Daughter cruises were the perfect bonding time, honoring our family and creating memories we could never have imagined. Sitting next to you in a parasail soaring high above St. Thomas at age 85 and hearing you say, “We have to do this again!” and then doing it again just following your 90th birthday celebration, shows what a spirit of adventure you had. Watching you zipline over the rain forest in the Dominican Republic at 88 years old, demanding that you were going to complete all 12 zips, showed grit that left us in awe. Knowing you helped start Camp Fire Girls in Hampshire giving many young girls important foundational skills was just one of the many ways you were a leader in the community. So many amazing memories we will cherish forever. Thank you thank you thank you, Jean Thornhill, for being the beautiful woman and mother you were. With love forever, your Number #2 Daughter, Susan

Susan Thornhill - October 29, 2021 at 04:49 PM