Del Norte Triplicate

OBITUARIES

Jean Johnston

October 28, 2024

It is with heavy hearts we announce the passing of our beloved mother and grandmother, Jean Tieken Johnston.

Jean left this world early on October 7th, 2024, in the Smith River home where she raised her family. She is survived by children Kent (Kellie), Grant, Dana (Craig), grandchildren Rhen (Jennifer) Cody, Michelle (Julian), Stacey, and great-grandchildren Caelan and Luke. She was 91 years old.

Jean was born August 1, 1933, in Saskatchewan, Canada, to an American family, with 4 much older siblings. Jean lost her mother at age 2, her older siblings and father stepping up to raise her as the youngest child.

At the age of 10, Jean and her family relocated to San Dimas, California, where her father managed an orange grove and Jean helped run the home while she attended school. It was there, as a high school student, that she met who would become her partner for life, Oscar W. Johnston.

Jean and Oscar were married in 1953, when Jean was 20. Oscar had recently been drafted to serve in the Korean War. Following Oscar’s military service, the two moved to West Covina and began to expand their

family to 5, before relocating a final time to Smith River, California.

Jean and Oscar shared a mutual love of many interests, mainly involving the beauty of nature. They enjoyed camping and anything to do with the outdoors, which inspired Oscar to begin a career as a wildlife sculptor. Jean managed the sales and client relations of their business, and in later years, began making jewelry and baskets to add to their creative brand.

They used natural elements for their art, like redwood from the forests and kelp and driftwood from the beach, depicting the wildlife that inhabited the area. They operated a small gallery for their creations which Jean ran for many years.

While Jean was a successful entrepreneur and creative alongside Oscar, her most important self-proclaimed title was ‘Mom’. She helped in church classes, school classes and was active in both Boy and Girl Scouts.

As her children grew, she widened her scope of service. Jean sat on the Juvenile Justice Committee in the late 70’s. She was a long-time member of Soroptimist International, the Pacific Flyway Decoy Association, and the Pelican Bay Arts Association. Perhaps Jean’s longest relationship with an organization was that with her church, having joined the Smith River United Methodist Church upon moving to Smith River in 1964. Her love and service for this community spanned across sixty years.

Throughout these years, Jean made many wonderful friends and cherished those relationships.

Following Oscar’s passing in 2009, after 56 years of marriage, Jean persevered even then, finding great pride in successfully operating a vacation rental property with her family home.

Jean made clear to all who knew her that her greatest success was her family. Her children, their children, and so on, all reflect the values and nurturing that she instilled in us. Jean said many times, “Don’t listen to their words, watch their actions”. This was how she lived her life. She showed her love through her actions. Jean may have left this world, but her love and memory live on in our hearts.

A Celebration of Life will be held for Jean at the United Methodist Church, 121 N. Beckstead Avenue, Smith River on Saturday, November 16th, 2024, at 11 am. Lunch will be provided following the service.

Celebration of Life will be held 11/16/24 at 11:00am, Smith River United Methodist Church.