



## Jeanne Henry (Kammer) Neff

January 30, 2025

Jeanne Henry (Kammer) Neff, a resident of Willow Street, PA, died on Thursday, January 30, 2025, at the age of 82. Born October 5, 1942, in Fairmont, WV, she was a daughter of Rebecca Jacqueline Ridgely and Percy Byron Henry. She was a graduate of Wheeling University and earned master's and doctoral degrees from Rice University and Carnegie-Mellon University respectively. She was awarded one of the first Woodrow Wilson Dissertation Fellowships in Women's Studies for her exploration of the uses of silence in the writings of American women poets, work which has been foundational for other scholars of women's art and literature.

She taught at Carlow University (PA), then joined the faculty at Wheeling, eventually becoming academic vice-president. In 1986, she moved to Susquehanna University (PA) as vice president for academic affairs and in 1995 was appointed president of Russell Sage College with campuses in Troy and Albany, NY. Following her retirement in 2008, she and her husband Ed moved to their long-time home at Deep Creek Lake, MD, where she served Garrett College during 2009-10 as interim president and, subsequently, as chair of its Foundation Board. In 2010, she received the Garrett College Board of Trustees Award for Outstanding Community Contribution, later renamed in her honor the Jeanne H. Neff Award. A scholarship fund to benefit returning women students was also established in her name.

An active civic volunteer, during her time in Wheeling Jeanne was a board member of the Wheeling Country Day School, the West Virginia Humanities Foundation and the Wheeling chapter of the American Red Cross and served on the Community Council of West Virginia Public Broadcasting. While at Susquehanna University, she was a director of the First National Bank in Sunbury, PA.

In the Capital Region of New York, she was a member of the City of Troy Waterfront Commission and co-chair of the Historic Troy 2020 planning group. She was honored by the New York Preservation League for her work in restoring historic buildings on Sage's Troy campus. She was a founder and chair of the University Heights Association, a partnership with schools of medicine, law and pharmacy adjacent to Sage's Albany campus. She served on boards of the Capital Bank and Trust Co., Capital Region Center for Economic Growth, Albany Medical Center, Albany Medical College and Albany Academy, as well as the New York Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities. She helped to establish the Capital Region Forum for Executive Women (FEW) and was co-host of 51%: The Program About Women on WAMC Northeast Public Radio.

Nationally, she was a founder of The New American Colleges and Universities (NACU), a consortium of independent comprehensive colleges; a member of the board of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) and chair of the board of the Council for Independent Colleges (CIC).

The Neffs moved to Willow Valley Communities, Lancaster, PA in 2015. In Lancaster, Jeanne joined Women United, a philanthropic group affiliated with the Lancaster County United Way and served on the Finance and Capital Allocations Committee of the Board of Trustees of Lancaster General Health/Penn Medicine. At Willow Valley, she sang in the Cultural Center Chorale. She was a member of St. Edward's Episcopal Church.

Jeanne Neff was a creative problem-solver with an entrepreneurial spirit, known for collaborative enterprises that benefited the institutions she served and the communities in which she lived. She was a voracious reader as well as a poet, pianist, singer and artist. She loved fine food, good wine and lively conversation (preferably together) as well as bridge, movies, theater and travel. A lifelong Democrat and feminist, she supported progressive causes including abolition of the death penalty, universal health insurance and broad access to higher education. Jeanne was a mentor for many, a loyal friend to many others, and a loving presence within her family.

She is survived by her husband of 46 years, Edward Williams Stephens Neff II; son, Brian Kammer (Meltem Alemdar) of Decatur, GA; stepdaughter, Carrie Mitchell (William) of Belle Mead, NJ and children Rachel and Wes; stepson Edward W.S. Neff III (Tina) of Gulf Breeze, FL and son, Will; stepbrother, Thomas Llewellyn (Sally) of Las Vegas, NV, their children Amy Reams (Paul) and Joseph Llewellyn (Jenna) and sister-in-law, Rachel Neville of Batavia, IL; grandchildren; nephew Scott (Sandi) Holly of Milford, DE and his daughter, Maggie Rose Holly; and nephew, Matt Holly (Steven Rowe) of Dallas, TX. She was predeceased by her sister, Rebecca Sue Henry Holly Meyer (Charles), and her stepbrother, David Llewellyn (Linda).

A celebration of Jeanne's life will occur Saturday, March 1, 2025, at 12 Noon beginning with a luncheon visitation and proceeding with a 1:00 pm memorial service. The celebration will be at Willow Valley in the Spring Run Auditorium on the fifth floor of the J building. When entering the main gate of Willow Valley (100 Willow Valley Lakes Drive, Willow Street, PA), follow the "Celebration of Life" signs. The service will be live-streamed for remote viewing at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/@theepiscopalchurcingarret73>

In lieu of flowers, gifts in her memory may be made to the Jeanne H. Neff Scholarship Fund, c/o Garrett College Foundation, 687 Mosser Road, McHenry, MD 21541, or to the Edward W.S. and Jeanne H. Neff Endowment Fund supporting operations of the Memory Center of Willow Valley. Gifts to the Fund should be made payable to Willow Valley Communities Charitable Foundation, 100 Willow Valley Lakes Drive, Willow Street, PA 17584. Gifts may also be made online via [foundation.willowvalleycommunities.org](http://foundation.willowvalleycommunities.org) (no www. prefix). Please note "Neff Endowment Fund" in the comment section of your donation.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

MAR 1. 12:00 PM (ET)

Spring Run Auditorium at Willow Valley  
950 Willow Valley Lakes Drive  
Willow Street, PA 17584

## Memorial Service

MAR 1. 1:00 PM (ET)

Spring Run Auditorium at Willow Valley  
950 Willow Valley Lakes Drive  
Willow Street, PA 17584

# Tribute Wall

DH

“ *Jeanne was one of the super star graduates of Wheeling College, later Wheeling Jesuit and now Wheeling University She was the first woman to hold the position of academic vice president at a Jesuit College or university, thanks in major part, to the encouragement and influence of Dr Paul Orr, one of her English professors at Wheeling.*

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**Dan Haller** - March 01, 2025 at 02:36 PM

CR

“ *My dearest, Jeanne, I cannot believe you are gone from this world. You have been one of the greatest leaders and mentors that many have never known before and will not ever meet again. Everything I learned from you; I have shared amongst the many nonprofits that I have consulted. I have felt the resistance that you endured during your leadership, but you taught me to persevere, because all will turn our right in the end. Please live on, celebrate and enjoy your afterworld life with Freddie, Judy, et al!*

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**Carol Reiser** - February 07, 2025 at 06:50 PM

SC

“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



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**Susie Crawford** - February 06, 2025 at 03:46 PM

SC

*Jeanne was an incredibly bright and gracious woman. We loved her dearly and shall miss her greatly. A fond memory above of the Neff Farewell to Deep Creek Lake dinner in August of 2015.*  
*Susie Crawford & Roger Higgins*

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**Susie Crawford** - February 06, 2025 at 03:49 PM

PD

“ *My wife and I came to Susquehanna University thanks to Jeanne. We were welcomed and integrated fully into the social and professional communities that both Jeanne and Ed nurtured there. Her caring leadership and support forged a continuing connection, well beyond our shared years there. I have recognized and remembered her invaluable interest in and regard for others. Her legacies will last beyond time.*

*Peter and Barbara Deekle*



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**Peter V Deekle** - February 06, 2025 at 12:18 PM

TM

“ *I remember questions Jeanne asked of me in 1987 during my interview for a faculty role at Susquehanna University, gently probing the essence of liberal arts education. They were so invitingly conversational that it took me years to grasp how incisive they were. She was a wonderful mentor and an exemplar of effective, thoughtful leadership for those of us at the outset of our careers. When our daughter was born with Down syndrome, she sent a bouquet of small white roses that perfectly captured her message of condolence and hope. Jeanne enriched my life, and the lives of many others.*

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**Tom Martin** - February 06, 2025 at 07:17 AM

PP

“ *Jeanne was an incredible role model for me when I was a young faculty member at Susquehanna. I was very lucky to have had the chance to work with her. She was smart and kind and interested in me and my life, professionally and personally. She made a real impact on many of us!* ”

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**Peggy Peeler** - February 04, 2025 at 11:54 AM



“ *1 file added to the tribute wall* ”



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**Doris Lyons** - February 03, 2025 at 04:15 PM



*One of many dinners with friends at Willow Valley*

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**Doris Lyons** - February 03, 2025 at 04:16 PM

WU

*On behalf of the faculty, staff and students of Wheeling University, we extend our deepest sympathy to Dr. Neff's family*

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**Wheeling University** - February 04, 2025 at 10:48 AM

BM

*I am a Russell Sage graduate and I had only ever known OF Jean Neff. What a terrific life of both academic leadership and of service she has contributed, to each of the many environments she so generously graced!*

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**Barbara Muller** - February 04, 2025 at 04:32 PM

AJ

*So saddened to hear of the passing of Jeanne Neff. She became President of Russell Sage College during my sophomore year. I remember her opening up Plum Building once for a gathering which including faculty, students and herself to get to know members of the community.*

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**A.N. Jones** - February 04, 2025 at 09:48 PM