



Rosemary Jean Sonntag

February 26, 1930 - November 19, 2023

Rosemary “Jean” Sonntag, 93, passed away peacefully on the morning of November 19, 2023. Born in East St. Louis, Illinois, she was the devoted wife of William A. Sonntag, who passed away in 2007. She is also preceded in death by her beloved and greatly admired sisters, Garnett Leree Frank and Grace Elizabeth Kirchner.

Jean, a homemaker and active community member, dedicated herself to her family and the people of Lancaster County. She was always ready to wrap her warm arms around her family and lend her wise heart and listening ear to all.

In 1961, she moved with her husband Bill to Lancaster for his job with RCA. Once her three children were enrolled in public school, she joined the League of Women Voters and began a life of public service. She was the Chairwoman of many committees in Lancaster County, including the 250th Anniversary Celebration Committee and the Water Resources Task Force.

Jean was a tireless advocate for her values, and her impact on the County is well documented in this newspaper’s archives. She led the committee that established a County department dedicated to crisis intervention for mental health and abuse (BHDS). As the committee’s Chairwoman, Jean worked to get Latino representation on the board. And, as a member of the League of Women Voters, she also led a county-wide study into disability access at

polling locations.

She faced many challenges in her work but remained an optimist. She was once quoted in a community newsletter saying, “I have faith in people’s goodwill and good sense. We have to find a middle ground.” This rang true in her work and her life. To those who knew her personally, Jean’s constant faith in them was a lifeline.

Her friends and family will always remember her generous spirit and her fantastically sharp wit. She was always ready to crack a joke, often remarking on the importance of a sense of humor and “being a kid at heart.” Her favorite way to indulge her inner kid was by playing in the water. She was often found at the beach or hosting her friends and family on the boat she shared with her husband.

She is survived by her three children, Diane Sonntag, William A. Sonntag Jr, and Wayne Sonntag; her four grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; and her sister-in-law and childhood friend, Joann Chesterman.

A Memorial Service celebrating Jean’s life will be held at The Groff Family Funeral Home, 528 W. Orange St. (corner of W. Orange & Pine Streets) in Lancaster, PA on Friday, December 1, 2023. The family will receive guests starting at 10:00 a.m., and the service will begin at 11:00 a.m.

In lieu of flowers, consider donating in Jean’s name to The Lancaster Farmland Trust, where she was Vice President in the 1980s.

Previous Events

Visitation

DEC 1. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

The Groffs Family Funeral and Cremation Services Inc
528 W Orange St.
Lancaster, PA 17603
(717) 394-5300
admin@thegroffs.com
<https://thegroffs.com/>

Memorial Service

DEC 1. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

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Tribute Wall

DG

“ My heartfelt condolences to the entire Sonntag family. As Jean's next-door neighbor, I was privileged to enjoy frequent interactions, cheerful conversations and laughter with this very gracious and much admired lady. She radiated uplifting optimism, a deep and abiding love for Mother Nature, saw beauty everywhere, and only the best in everyone.

Dan Gillis November 29, 2023

Dan Edward Gillis - November 29, 2023 at 06:41 PM

ZK

“ My path crossed with Jeans many times. As a news reporter, she was a great person to interview on one of her many areas of interest like the Farmland Trust and the League of Women Voters. She was a shining light in the community of Lancaster.
Zoa Kile

Zoa Kike - November 27, 2023 at 07:12 PM

DK

“ My deepest sympathy to Jean's family. For 35 years I worked in the County Commissioners' Office. Most times Jean came to the weekly County Commissioners' Meetings to stay informed and to look out for the citizens of Lancaster County. She loved Lancaster County. I sure enjoyed talking to Jean. I am so thankful that Jean was part of my life. RIP, Jean.
Doris S. Kiehl, Former Chief Clerk for Lancaster County

Doris S. Kiehl - November 26, 2023 at 06:05 PM

AP

“ *My parents, Pat and Marge Meier thought the world of Bill and Jean. They had a midwestern bond. Our deepest condolences to the Sontag family*
Anne Meier Pryzbylkowski

Anne Pryzbylkowski - November 26, 2023 at 01:11 PM

PF

To Jean's children---Gere and I thought the world of your mother. She was a lovely woman, always so friendly and encouraging, with an optimistic approach to challenges. We knew your parents thru boating (we had the Frailibus) and spent a lot of summer weekends on the Bay with them with the Power Squadron. Your dad, and my husband, were commanders. Which meant your mom and I did a lot of work! They were a wonderful couple, you can be so proud of them and the legacy they left for you. My heartfelt sympathy, in this loss, the world was a better place for your mother having been here. Sincerely, Peggy Frailey

Peggy Frailey - November 26, 2023 at 05:31 PM

JM

I knew Jean through the League of Women Voters of Lancaster County. She was diligent, proud of her children, welcoming, an excellent role model. I will miss her hearty laughter. My condolences to the family.

Jennifer Mann - November 27, 2023 at 11:19 AM