



## Ruth Warner Van Horn

January 20, 2019

Ruth Warner Van Horn, 100, of Lancaster, PA, died at Willow Valley Communities on Sunday, January 20, 2019. She was preceded in death by her husband John Van Horn, and is survived by his nieces and nephews. Ruth received her bachelor's and master's degrees from UCLA and her doctorate from Penn State University. Dr. Van Horn was the first female professor of the chemistry department at F&M College, teaching organic chemistry, and influencing many of her students to enter the fields of chemistry and medicine. At her retirement dinner from F&M, John Farrell said of her: "Ruth Van Horn is many things: A chemist, a gardener, a champion of wildlife, a scholar and a friend...but she is not replaceable". The family would like to extend a special Thank You to the staff of Willow Valley for the care of Ruth. At Ruth's request, there will be no service.

# Tribute Wall



“ *Ruth Warner Van Horn*

October 22, 2023 at 11:34 PM



“ *My advisor freshman year, a true leader, and a very gracious lady.*

**Ed Daly** - November 30, 2019 at 12:20 PM



“ *What a tremendous force Ruth was. I only came to know her in her last few years and I must say I will remember her always. I wish I would have known her way back when too, but I feel blessed to have known her at all.*

*My condolences to the family.*

**tonda mclaughlin** - March 29, 2019 at 10:23 AM



“ *My deepest condolences to the family for this tremendous loss. May the words found at Isaiah 26:19 bring you comfort in knowing that you will one day see Ruth again.*

*Isaiah 26:19 "Your dead will live. My corpses will rise up. Awake and shout joyfully, You residents in the dust! For your dew is as the dew of the morning, And the earth will let those powerless in death come to life"*

**Suzy M** - January 29, 2019 at 11:15 PM

EF

“ 2 files added to the album *Ruth W. Van Horn*



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**Ed Fenlon** - January 29, 2019 at 08:30 PM

“ The following is from the Franklin and Marshall Chemistry newsletter:

*For 33 years (1949 to 1982) the Chemistry Department was graced by the presence of Ruth Warner Van Horn, the first female faculty member in the chemistry department and one of the first female instructors on campus. In 1954, she was the first female faculty member to be tenured and in 1968, she participated in the special task force on coeducation.*

*Ruth taught the organic course for majors headed to graduate school (Robert Cross taught the premeds). It was a tough course and there were only a few As! Waiting outside her office for a chance to ask a question, I overheard Ruth telling a student that he really had done quite well in the last exam (he had a grade of C). In 1960 when I was in her course, the textbook was Geissman's Principles of Organic Chemistry (1959), which used a combination of what had been the traditional functional group approach and the new mechanistic approach championed by the book Cram and Hammond (1959). Ruth received her bachelor's and master's from UCLA and her PhD from Penn State. UCLA was where both Geissman and Donald Cram taught, and consequently her approach to organic was also largely mechanistic.*

*Her presence in the department seemed always to exert a positive influence on departmental decisions. She was the one to turn to for a fair but generally positive evaluation of a new idea for a course or laboratory project.*

*The respect that students had for Ruth is illustrated by the rumor that she taught at F&M for a contract salary of \$1 per year because of her royalties from the invention of Nylon. This rumor persisted for most of Ruth's teaching career at F&M.*

*Ruth was born in 1918 and next spring will celebrate her 100th birthday.*

*Fittingly, we have dedicated our newsletter this year to her and share some other alumni's reflections. If you would like to share a memory with her and us, please email Julie Gemmell ([jgemmell@fandm.edu](mailto:jgemmell@fandm.edu)).*

*Claude Yoder Emeritus Charles A. Dana Professor of Chemistry and former student of Ruth*

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**Claude Yoder** - January 25, 2019 at 01:41 PM

CY

“ 1 file added to the album Ruth W. Van Horn



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**Claude Yoder** - January 25, 2019 at 12:31 PM

DR

*Ruth was a friend, a mentor and a teacher to me. She was instrumental in me launching my educational career many years ago. I enjoyed walking with her touring her flower garden in her back yard while she was still living in her house at Old Philadelphia Pike. I enjoyed lunch dates with her for many years. Ruth was a very private person, but had a very loving and a warm heart, and was dedicated to educating others! I will miss her. Rest in peace Ruth. Love you forever. Dorca Kisare-Ressler*

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**Dorca Kisare- Ressler** - January 27, 2019 at 05:14 PM

RM

*I was saddened to hear of the passing of Dr. Ruth Van Horn. She was my organic chemistry professor during my sophomore year at F+M in 1972 when I was a pre-med student. While the 2 semester course material was challenging, she taught in a way that was straight forward and understandable. She was very approachable and always available to answer questions. Organic was considered the 'killer course' for the pre-med students and that if you did well well, you had a good chance of succeeding to get into med school. I was fortunate to have such a dedicated and knowledgable teacher in Dr. Van Horn, which made organic an interesting and enjoyable year of study. I will always be appreciative for her dedication to teaching and the kindness she conveyed to me and my fellow students at F+M. I wish her family and former colleagues at F+M my sincere condolences on her loss. Rest in peace, Dr. Van Horn - you made a difference in the lives of many young people who came through your classroom and who are now making significant contributions to society in the fields of science and medicine.*

*Robert Needleman, MD*

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**Robert Needleman, MD** - September 25, 2020 at 02:20 AM

JY

*I met Ruth when she was exiled to willow valley's skilled care. For feeding stray Cats. It was a joy when I first met her. Such a smart woman. I was her housekeeper. We would talk about so much mostly animals. I shared my Cat stories. Smart women in her 90s doing chemistry about medicine. I Made a great friend. She needs to be recognized More At F&M 1st Women and Humanitan..Great strong women*

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**Jane Yancoskie** - February 24, 2021 at 08:19 PM

MS

*I worked as a student assistant in her Chemistry Lab in my Junior year at F&M. I appreciated her advice about life and career.*

*Michael Smith class of 1973*

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**Michael J Smith** - May 14, 2021 at 07:09 AM