



Joann H. Berg

August 3, 1946 - December 11, 2017

Mineral Point - Joann H. Berg, age 71, of Dodgeville passed away peacefully on Monday, December 11, 2017 at Atrium Post Acute Care in Mineral Point.

Joann Berg's 71 years were rich with pastimes; intellectual, artistic, and civic engagement; and the love of family and friends.

She was born Joann Helen Sydow on August 3, 1946, in Carlsbad, New Mexico, the fifth of seven children born to parents originally from rural Wisconsin. The proudest aspect of her childhood, she would often recount, is that she could read by the age of four and was called upon to complete book reports for her older siblings.

That love of reading would be a hallmark of her life. Her daughter, Kerrie, recalls how important it was to her mother to have a personal library. Always a meticulous record-keeper, Joann kept a journal of her literary consumption, logging more than 2,400 books, plays, and works of poetry in several languages.

With such a thirst for knowledge, it is no surprise that Joann excelled in school. She was motivated to pursue a classical Catholic education at a boarding high school in Wichita, Kansas. She spent two years there, then returned home to Carlsbad, where she flouted convention, petitioning for courses in algebra instead of the traditional "female" pursuits of home economics and typing.

Her quest for rigor was rewarded with admission to Grinnell College in Iowa in 1964. Here she pursued a degree in German, even working for a summer as a chambermaid in Mainz to sharpen her language skills. She followed this with a master's degree in German language and literature at Middlebury College in Vermont, a program which gave her the opportunity to co-study at Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz. She was proud of her education, often asserting that "Harvard was the Grinnell of the East," and devoting her life to ensuring that her daughters had access to a similarly expansive education.

Joann's school years set the stage for several facets of her life. In college, her participation in mock conventions and on George McGovern's presidential campaign inspired a lifetime of political volunteerism – one that was bookended with service at the

Iowa County Democratic headquarters and campaigning in the 2016 election.

Throughout her life, she cherished sending and receiving correspondence, maintaining long-distance friendships overseas, most notably with her roommate in Mainz and the other an exchange student from Australia. Both women served as namesakes for her two daughters.

But it was her summer visits to grandparents that established Joann's love for Wisconsin's rustic landscape and would persuade her to settle in the outskirts of Milwaukee after graduate school. It was here that Joann began teaching German, and where she would meet and ultimately marry fellow German teacher Guenther Berg in 1971. Their daughter Ingrid was born in 1973 and Kerrie in 1976. Though primarily a homemaker during this time, Joann found herself back in the workforce full time when the marriage ended in 1980.

Joann took a position as a bilingual secretary in the Hartford office of what was then Wacker Corporation, a construction-industry supplier headquartered in Munich. Though the beginnings were inauspicious – in the beginning she had to cross a picket line to get to work – she would go on to serve the company for 34 years, ultimately becoming manager of the publishing department, where she edited and wrote technical publications in German and arranged translation into other languages.

During this time, she raised her girls as a single mother, working hard to instill in them a love of language, art, literature – even sports – and involving herself in their passions, as well. The girls fondly recall her saving to expose them to world-class events, from *Les Misérables* in Chicago to the 1982 World Series. For years, she was also a devoted swim parent, logging hundreds of weekends on the bleachers cheering her daughters on.

Through the years, Joann maintained her passion not only for literature, but also for theater, abstract art, and bridge. One of her favorite excursions was to see Shakespeare in Stratford-upon-Avon, Canada, and she adored the Milwaukee Art Museum. Her most recent and prized acquisition was a print she had framed of Kandinsky's "Black Lines." And she has made dear friends playing bridge for the last five decades.

Later in life, Joann also found joy in more "frivolous" indulgences – coloring, partaking in pedicures, collecting Vera Bradley purses, and devouring movies from Hallmark's Hall of Fame.

But most of all, Joann relished spending time with loved ones. Her younger brother Bob and wife Linda have been her constant companions and unfailing supporters, whether

helping her move or sharing a Packers game. Joann also cherishes her many friends, her daughters, her son-in-law Bob, and her granddaughter Ellie, whom, she said, "makes up for in quality what I didn't get in quantity."

Ingrid recalls fondly the way in which her mother and daughter have cared for each other: "Ten years ago my mom bought Ellie a beautiful, large wooden advent calendar. Each year, she would lovingly fill it with gifts, from fancy barrettes to a goat given in Ellie's name to a child in Africa. This year, when my mom was too sick to do it, Ellie took it over and filled it with gifts for her instead."

Ingrid, Kerrie and the rest of Joann's family would like to thank everyone for the friendship they shared with Joann and for supporting her family during their time of loss. The family wishes everyone a safe and blessed holiday season.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held on Friday, December 15, 2017 at 11:00 a.m. at Ss. Mary & Paul's Catholic Church in Mineral Point. Fr. Jim Leeser will officiate. Burial will be in Carlsbad, New Mexico at a later date. A visitation will be held on Thursday, December 14, 2017 from 4:00 until 8:00 p.m at the GORGEN FUNERAL HOME in Mineral Point and on Friday from 10:00 until 11:00 a.m. at the church.

In lieu of flowers please consider memorials to the Milwaukee Arts Museum, 700 N. Arts Museum Drive,

continued...

2

Next

...continued

Milwaukee, WI 53202.

Previous

1

2

Tribute Wall



“ *Joann H. Berg*

November 15, 2022 at 06:49 AM

EB

“ *Ingrid and Kerrie, I just found out about your mom's passing. I wondered why I hadn't received a Christmas letter this year, but I was too caught up in my own problems (impending divorce) to pursue it. I also worked with her at Wacker; she was my direct supervisor. She talked about you girls all the time! I'm so sorry to hear of her passing. Love to you both.*

Evelyn Baka - June 05, 2018 at 10:51 AM

RL

“ *Dr Berg, I am so saddened to hear about your mom, Joann was such a great lady. I enjoyed taking care of her for the short time that I knew here. Prayers to your whole family God Bless*

Rhonda Laufenberg - April 28, 2018 at 01:15 AM

CO

“ *It was a pleasure working with Joann for the 8 years I was with Wacker Neuson. She was a colleague, confidant, and more importantly, a role model and friend. Prayers to the family.*

Chris Olmsted - April 28, 2018 at 01:15 AM

DH

“ *Great memories of working with your Mom, and Ingrid back at Wacker (R&D department) oh so many years ago. My prayers are with you and your family at this time of need.*

David Hoffman - April 28, 2018 at 01:15 AM

SP

“ *I, like most of my former colleagues at Wacker, will never forget Joann's chuckle. We'd often go out of our way to make her laugh just so we could sit back and enjoy the show. She left us way too soon. My heart breaks for all of you who have been left behind. Joann was a great lady, a caring boss, a friend, and mentor who left her mark on this world. She will definitely be missed but will never be forgotten.*

Sue Partin - April 28, 2018 at 01:15 AM

SS

“ I worked with your Mom for 17 yrs at Wacker and was fortunate to get to know her quite well. Joann was a wonderful person to work with as she was so full of information that was very helpful in my job working in the Design Engineering Department. We have missed her so much at Wacker. God bless you all in this time of sorrow!!!Sue Stenzel

Sue Stenzel - April 28, 2018 at 01:15 AM

DS

“ Carrie, Ingrid and family, I am sorry to hear that your Mom has gone home to be with her heavenly family, May you find comfort in knowing how many lives she touched on her walk on this earth! During the years I was married to you mom's cousin Jim Sydow, I always looked forward to her Christmas letters and stories of her and your life even after Jim and I divorced we still continued to keep in touch. Please extend my condolences to all of the Sydow family. I will keep you all in my thoughts and prayers.

Dianne Sydow - April 28, 2018 at 01:15 AM



“ We are deeply sorry to hear about Joann. May you be comforted by what is found at Is.26:19. Our thoughts are with you.

April 28, 2018 at 01:15 AM

DO

“ Ingrid and Kerrie, I know how devoted Joann was to her loving daughters. May you find peace and comfort in the beautiful memories you have of your wonderful mother.

Diane OLeary - April 28, 2018 at 01:15 AM