



Mary Ellen Bryan

May 9, 1933 - November 27, 2020

Mary Ellen McLean Bryan passed away peacefully on November 27, 2020, after a short illness. She was 87 and had lived in Yreka for nearly 60 years and in Siskiyou County for almost 65 years.

Mary Ellen was born in Eureka on May 9, 1933. She was the eldest child of Harry McLean, a native of New Zealand, and Margaret Graham McLean, a native of Arcata. Margaret's parents were both born in what is now Northern Ireland. As a child, Mary Ellen's family, which also included her younger brother Norman, moved around mill towns in Northern California following her father in his employment as a saw filer. The family moved to Castella when Mary Ellen started seventh grade and then to Dunsmuir where she attended high school. She graduated from Dunsmuir High School as valedictorian in 1952.

Mary Ellen moved south to attend the University of California at Berkeley, graduating in 1956. She then moved across the bay to attend Stanford University, receiving her first master's degree in 1957. She taught physical education and English at Monterey Peninsula College (MPC) for several years.

While at MPC, she was introduced to Harry Bryan through mutual Siskiyou County friends. Harry made the long drive from Yreka to see Mary Ellen in

Monterey many times. Harry and Mary Ellen were married on June 24, 1961 at the Methodist Church in Dunsmuir. They made their home in Yreka where Harry was a partner in Piemme & Bryan, Inc., Civil Engineering and Land Surveying. Mary Ellen taught English at Yreka High School for several years. Their fifty-year marriage was proof that the Cal-Stanford rivalry could be bridged!

Mary Ellen left YHS as she and Harry started their family. While her children, Elena and Emerson, were small, she focused her attention on her family, on her community, and expanding her educational horizons. She was part of the group of women that founded the Yreka Co-Op Nursery School. She was a charter member of the Candy Mountain Chapter of the Children's Home Society, the only state-wide adoption agency at that time. The Chapter functioned for many years in Yreka. She also taught adult extension courses privately and at the College of the Siskiyous.

With her kids were older, she returned to school, at Southern Oregon University (then SOSU), to obtain a second master's degree with a focus on psychology and education. She became a licensed Marriage Family Therapist and worked as a therapist at the Siskiyou County Mental Health Department and in private practice. Studying Bowen Family Systems Theory was a focus for Mary Ellen for more than thirty years.

Mary Ellen believed in giving back to her community. She was recognized as Yreka Citizen of the Year in 2010 for her contributions. An early supporter of hospice, she was a member of Madrone Hospice's Board of Directors from 1994 to her death and was chairman of the Board for several years. She also enjoyed working as a volunteer at the Hospice Heartisan Boutique. Mary Ellen was a board member of the Fairchild Medical Center Foundation and an active participant in its activities.

The arts were a particular passion of Mary Ellen, both as a supporter and, on occasion, as a participant. She was a founding member of the Red Scarf Society of the Performing Arts, a local organization established to enhance the cultural life and promote arts in Siskiyou County, support the Yreka theater complex, and provide musical outreach to local schools. Bringing high quality performers to Siskiyou County was a joy to her. Mary Ellen also contributed, on occasion, her own creations to the Liberty Arts Gallery.

Mary Ellen loved to wander, whether on the California coast, to Lake Tahoe, around the United States, to Europe, New Zealand or to China. She travelled as often as she could, with Harry, her children and grandchildren, brother, cousins, and good friends.

Mary Ellen was preceded in death by her beloved, Harry, in 2011; by her parents; by Harry's parents, Lee and Ella Bryan; and by Harry's brother, Jim, and his wife, Betty. She is survived by her daughter, Elena Bryan of Kensington, Maryland; her son and daughter-in-law, Emerson and Christine (Dee Dee) Bryan and her granddaughters, Blakeley and McKenlee Bryan, of San Luis Obispo; her brother and sister-in-law, Norman and Susan McLean of Santa Rosa; nieces Leslie McLean of Santa Cruz and Shawna McLean Fross and family of Petaluma, and their mother, Barbara McLean of Ukiah; niece Jennifer Bryan of Yreka and her family, and nephew Brian Bryan of Florida and his family. She leaves many cousins in California, New Zealand, and Northern Ireland, and dear friends and colleagues in Siskiyou County and beyond.

Mary Ellen's family especially appreciates the care and assistance extended to Mary Ellen and to them by Madrone Hospice.

The family plans to hold a celebration of life when conditions allow in 2021.

Should friends and colleagues wish to remember Mary Ellen with a charitable donation, the family suggests a contribution to Madrone Hospice, 255 Collier Court, Yreka CA 96097, or to the Red Scarf Society for the Performing Arts, P.O. Box 1824, Yreka CA 96097.

Tribute Wall



“ 2 files added to the album *Obituary Wall*



Girdner Funeral Chapel - April 27 at 04:12 PM

DG

“ So sorry to hear this. She was a good friend.

Dan Gerson - January 14, 2021 at 12:00 AM

KO

“ Thank you *Mary Ellen* for being an inspiration both personally and professionally. You showed us the true example of giving unconditional positive regard to all, always. Your light will be missed.

Kathleen O'Neill - January 13, 2021 at 12:00 AM

JM

“ *Mary Ellen Bryan*

Janice McAllister - January 08, 2021 at 12:00 AM

AK

“ *Andra Koke lit a candle in memory of Mary Ellen Bryan*



Andra Koke - January 08, 2021 at 12:00 AM

MM

“ *Mary Ellen was a friend who helped me so much I can't say. I am blessed to have known her. Maggie Maguire*

Maggie Maguire - January 08, 2021 at 12:00 AM

HM

“ *I'll miss her! She was so incredibly sweet with a dash of sass!!* ❤️

Heather Miller - January 07, 2021 at 12:00 AM

SH

“ *Elena Bryan , so very sorry. It's been such a difficult year and I do not like this stage of life that we are all losing our parents.* ❤️

Sherri Lillard Hanna - January 07, 2021 at 12:00 AM

MH

“ *Aw what an intelligent fine person she was. I miss her sweet smile and chuckle.
I will truly miss her, as will our community.
Mary Ellen I'm going to attempt to make your polenta.
Love you much*

Maggie Harris - January 07, 2021 at 12:00 AM

AB

“ *A very special lady, who will be missed by so many!*

Arlene Berwick - January 07, 2021 at 12:00 AM

LU

“ *A fine woman! So glad I had the pleasure to know her! And yes she was a madrone hospice treasure!*

Lori Urrutia - January 07, 2021 at 12:00 AM

DT

“ 


Donna Kleaver Thompson - January 07, 2021 at 12:00 AM

JA

“ *Such a beautiful soul.*

Julie Anderson - January 07, 2021 at 12:00 AM

DC

“ *So sorry Elena! Thinking of you!* 

Debbie Kruchko Corbitt - January 07, 2021 at 12:00 AM

MC

“ *She was one in a million. A big loss for our community and her family.*

Marcia Cushman-Perkins - January 07, 2021 at 12:00 AM

GW

“ *She was a lovely lady, and I had the pleasure of working with her. She will be missed.*

Glenn Aletha Wilson - January 07, 2021 at 12:00 AM

SF

“ Oh my gosh, she truly was, what an incredible legacy 🙏🌟 thank you for sharing...

Susana J. Fox-Sponsler - January 07, 2021 at 12:00 AM

SG

“ What a loss. Another beautiful light has gone out in Yreka. The "old guard" leaves so many special memories 😞❤

Shirley Giardino - January 07, 2021 at 12:00 AM

EJ

“ We will miss her so much. What a wonderful person. With a heart of gold.

Ellen Lowell Janson - January 07, 2021 at 12:00 AM

GB

“ We will all miss Mary Ellen truly one in a million She touched so many lives in our Community

Grace Bennett - January 07, 2021 at 12:00 AM

TL

“ We lost a great lady. Rest In Peace friend.

Tracy Louie - January 07, 2021 at 12:00 AM