

# JEAN MARIE SILVERNAIL

June 19, 1933 - January 19, 2024

Daughter of Martin J. and Katherine E. (Volk) Silvernail, Jean was born in Aberdeen, South Dakota, the eldest of eight children. She is preceded in death by her parents; brothers, Robert and James; and beloved sister-in-law, Julie Silvernail; niece, Deborah Silvernail Devereaux; and nephew, Michael Graikowski. She is survived by her sister, Phyllis Graikowski; brothers, Thomas, Paul, David, and Bernie Silvernail; sisters-in-law, Carrie Silvernail, Sheila Silvernail, Patty Silvernail, and Janet Silvernail; twenty beloved nephews and nieces; and twenty-seven grand-nieces and nephews. Entering the convent at the age of 14, Jean became a Benedictine nun at Sacred Heart Monastery in Yankton, S.D. She taught a variety of primary, secondary, and high school courses in Nebraska and South Dakota, winding up as the Mother Superior of a parish in Pueblo Colorado. She left the convent in 1968 to broaden her impact. Through hard work, applying for every grant, scholarship, and financial assistance possible, and surviving on peanut butter, she completed her master's in counseling at Arizona State University. She worked briefly with Headstart in Tacoma, Washington, and then, in 1971, moved to Pennsylvania and completed her doctorate in Education at the University of Pittsburgh.

The second phase of her career was in adult education. She was responsible for faculty development at Robert Morris University, Pittsburgh, where she also taught courses in adult learning. She was a consultant to the Pennsylvania Medical Society and the Pennsylvania Department of Education. In 1990 she became Director of the Institute of Education at South Hills Health Center (Jefferson Regional Medical Center) in Pittsburgh. She quietly established long-term meaningful connections across the four generations of her far-flung family. She became the family's binding force after her mother's death in 1996. She was joyfully engaged with friends and family, consistently noting their achievements and celebrating their milestones. She was the person to turn to when you needed encouragement, particularly to aspire to higher education or to take a risk that would improve you. Jean's third phase was a wonderful retirement. This allowed her to do what she loved...travel. Visiting family living in all parts of the country created one destination after another, including her favorite, Manzanita, Oregon. The world was another destination, with trips with a variety of friends and family to Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Russia, Iceland, Mexico, Costa Rica, and several countries in Africa. She sailed around the world as an administrator with the Semester at Sea program, experiencing another dozen countries. Love of life, dear friends, music, opera, drama, family, making jewelry, reading, family... how does one describe a full life, one driven by a passion for learning? Her circle of friends was wide, but dear to her were Diane Davis, Rita Wilson, Juliana Shayne, and sisters-in-law Jeannie and Julie (both deceased), Carrie, Sheila, and Patty.

Jean's motto was "Joie I Vivre!", which is certainly how she lived her life. She requested that we not mourn her passing, but celebrate her life. To honor that request and her love of travel, life celebrations will be held in Pittsburgh, Minneapolis, Manzanita, and Aberdeen, where her ashes will be interred. The locations and dates of these celebrations will be posted soon on Caring Bridge under JeanSilvernail2. Please join us at one of these locations to celebrate her life. Arrangements by **JOHN A. FREYVOGEL SONS, INC.** ([freyvogelfuneralhome.com](http://freyvogelfuneralhome.com)).

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