

JEAN FRANCISKUTZ POTTER



Jean Francis Kutz Potter.

August 16, 1933 - March 18, 2024. 90 years old.

The simple facts. Name, birth, death, age. However, please focus in on that tiny 'dash' between the years of her birth and of her death; that seemingly insignificant punctuation mark that we don't give much thought or weight to. That dash represents all the time our mother was LIVING. That small, almost invisible dash

contains all the stuff, all the life, all of the gazillion bits that describe our lives and give it meaning. It holds our entire story, start to finish. And wow, did our mom fill that dash with her story to the brim.

In sum, Jean was a force. Mom's dash mark contains a lifetime of love, adventure, and memories. A lifetime of successes, failures, joy and sadness; of determination, defeat, birth, death and transformation. Countless memories with friends, family, dinners out, trips, decisions made in haste and decisions made over time. Thousands of sunsets, some sunrises (sleeping until noon was her preference), and holidays. Of deep thought and funny jokes. Of grief and of silliness. Of seeing old friends and making new ones from all walks of life. Of being generous yet also disciplined. Of watching those she loved mature, get married, have children, grow old and wise, or sadly, seeing loved ones pass on way too soon.

She was tenacious, proudly opinionated, and irreverent, but also warm, clever and open. She loved a good mystery novel and teaching English, demanding proper grammar and a strong edit, whether it be a detailed term paper or a simple grocery list. She welcomed and often started heated political debates, especially in this era of Trump. She espoused feminism and was fiercely loyal to her beliefs. In all things, mom was unapologetically and most authentically herself.

She cherished her porch parties with her Chatham Village friends and plenty of wine to share. She was most excited when traveling the world, watching Penn State football, the Red Zone and all Pittsburgh sports teams. She loved the sense of adventure a new destination would bring, or the drama of a close score at the end of a good season. She took one playoff game so seriously, she fainted after the Steelers barely pulled off a win. She loved to cook and briefly followed the Galloping Gourmet during the 70's. We all begged her to stop when she tried to get us to eat Sweetbreads with Madeira Sauce. The dog was hoping she would continue, having enjoyed the rejects. Instead, we indulged ourselves with her delicious pot roast, or chicken enchilada casserole, which was much more our level. Anything sparkly and turquoise, especially shoes and nail polish, lit her up. She could often be seen walking all around Mt. Washington or circling the lake in Juno Beach with ABBA playing on her Walkman and a dance in her step. She tried tennis for a while. She didn't even bother with golf. But she truly loved to ski and was always excited by a fresh fall of snow on the slopes with a roaring fire and Gluhwein to end the day. A tall scotch and water on the shores of Beachbound with family and friends by her side was her idea of bliss. After our father Tad passed away, she imagined him fishing off the clouds in heaven as we watched the moon rise on that beloved beach, eating Boursin cheese and Triscuits at a plastic picnic table. She would smile up towards the clouds, and raise a toast to her greatest love as if he was still right by her side. She wholeheartedly adored her 3 children, her 8 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren. She always had a smile on her face, even while sleeping. Near the end, while in the meanest grip of dementia, she still continued to smile.

Never in question was the love she shared with us all and the gratitude she felt when we were around. She found endless joy in the simplicity of loving her people and deeply impacted those she loved by being herself. Her life lessons inspired us to be decent, happy, positive. To be true to ourselves. To stand up for what we believe in. To give back when we can and most importantly to always love with a full heart. She gave us all the best blueprint for life and how to live it. As a close family member just said to me about mom, "If you are going to bat a thousand percent at something in life, that's the arena to do it in".

So, in her spirit, think about the dash that will define your own life. Make your dash a good one. Remember that life is to be lived and that we are not immortal. Fill your dash full with adventure, family, love, laughter, fun, and generosity. As one of her favorite sayings from Hunter S. Thompson goes, "Life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well preserved body. But rather to skid in broadside, in a cloud of smoke, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and loudly proclaiming "Wow, what a ride!"

Mission accomplished, mom. You lived life to the absolute fullest. We love you, we miss you. You were an incredible woman. We will honor your spirit throughout our own dash marks.

Please join us in celebrating her life on April 21, 2024, at the Aspinwall Riverfront Park at 1:00 p.m.

Donations to Planned Parenthood in her honor would be welcome Arrangements by **WEDDELL-AJAK FUNERAL HOME**, Aspinwall.

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