

CHARLOTTE POLEMAN



Charlotte Louise Poleman, age 91, died peacefully on August 16, 2024, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She was born on December 8, 1932, in Tucson, Arizona, where she and her sister Barbara were raised by their loving parents, Dwight and Dorothy Mallery, amidst the Saguaro cacti of the Sonoran Desert on the flanks of Tumamoc Hill. She was preceded in death by her husband, Thomas Poleman,

and is survived by her children Carol Becker (Charlie), Clare Stephenson (Pat), Walter Poleman (Jennifer), and Tom Poleman (Louise). She is also survived by her 12 grandchildren: Charlotte, Daniel, Lindsay, Sarah, Jonathan, Catherine, Margaret, Thomas, Wynne, Maeve, Michael, and Kelly, and her six great-grandchildren: Keira, Camille, Ruby, Ada, Iris, and Henry.

Charlotte graduated from North Texas State University with a degree in home economics, and soon became a registered dietitian. She met her future husband, Tom, in Mexico City, and they were married in Sausalito, California in 1955. They moved to Ithaca in 1963, when Tom accepted a position as an agricultural economist at Cornell University, and together they raised their four children amidst the beautiful Finger Lakes of upstate New York. For many years, Charlotte was the dietitian at Lakeside Nursing Home in Ithaca; she also co-authored a college nutrition textbook, and worked with developmentally disabled adults.

She will always be remembered with deep affection by her children: "Mom loved to travel with us, and fully embraced the adventure and challenge of taking the family to live in East Africa when we were young kids during our father's year-long sabbatical in 1967. To this day we marvel at her capacity to keep us all safe and supported as we drove our station wagon through the bush amidst huge elephants and curious baboons, navigated a new school system based on British culture, and set up a new household after we lost our luggage off the car roof!"

"One highlight in our mother's life was the bond she developed with the non-human members of the family. Our first dog was a bloodhound, a choice of breed made by a young Carol perusing a picture book! Flopper was beloved, but not above guarding the refrigerator and growling at our intimidated visiting grandmother. Other pets were gerbils, parakeets (all named J.C.), another bloodhound, three beagles, and several cats. Chipper, an old orange tabby, survives her and did years of duty as her companion in assisted living. Mom's kind manner and non-disciplinary style made her the favorite of all our pets."

"Mom was a gentle, godly woman who expressed her faith in beautiful ways. She trusted the Lord through joys and difficulties alike, and nurtured the faith of her children by taking them to church every Sunday. Mom's faith was also beautifully expressed in the gracious way she treated others. She generously gave of herself through her cooking skills and kind hospitality, whether by keeping the cookie jar full for her four hungry kids or by teaming up with Dad to host the annual "least cost dinner" for graduate students studying how to meet the world's food needs. And her homemade pasta, popovers, and enchiladas were legendary!"

"Mom always loved music. It was part of her spirit. She would always hum something as she went through her daily activities and we were all treated to nightly bedtime serenades after story-time as young children. Her voice was beautiful and always comforting when we needed her the most. As we grew older, her love of music was imprinted on us. As a family we would perform her favorites for her, like Edelweiss and You Are My Sunshine, and her eyes would always light up. Even as we gathered to sing weeks before her final days her face was glowing and her voice clear and strong."

Many wonderful caregivers in Ithaca and Pittsburgh helped to make Charlotte's final years comfortable. We are grateful to all, and wish especially to thank Nancy Peters and Victoria Robinson for their dedication and kindness. We will be gathering to celebrate Charlotte's life on Saturday, August 31, 2024, at the Morrellville Church of the Brethren in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. There will be a memorial service at 4:30 PM followed by a dinner featuring Charlotte's favorite dishes from the Southwest. In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation in support of the Willow Glen Christian School (1768 Dryden Rd, Freeville, NY 13068). Arrangements by **JOHN A. FREYVOGEL SONS, INC.** (freyvogelfuneralhome.com).

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