

Phoenix - DeLoris Whitney passed away suddenly on September 2, 2018, at Mayo Clinic Hospital in Phoenix, Arizona, surrounded by her family. She was 80 years old.

DeLoris was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on April 14, 1938, to Emmett L. and Margueritte Tandy Duemke. She began taking piano lessons as a young child and developed a lifelong love for playing the piano. Many of her summers were spent in Fort Worth and Rockport, Texas, with her maternal grandparents, David and Carmen Tandy. Her grandfather was an avid fisherman, and she picked up that hobby, enjoying fishing alongside him in the Gulf of Mexico. She continued to travel to the Rockport area regularly, owning a vacation home there until earlier this year.

After graduating from Edison High School in Minneapolis, DeLoris attended Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts, and received a B.A. in 1960 with a major in Religion and a minor in Spanish Literature. After college, she taught High School Spanish in Texas, where her parents had moved.

DeLoris met Erwin Whitney in Corpus Christi in a Sunday School class at First United Methodist Church, where the two ultimately married on June 24, 1967. They first lived in Beaumont, Texas, before Erwin's work took them to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Lake Charles, Louisiana; and then to Fort Worth for 30 years. They retired to Scottsdale, Arizona, in 2012.

DeLoris was a proud mother, who fully supported her two sons in their education, their careers, their hobbies, and their families, even when at times they lived many miles apart.

Poetry was an integral part of DeLoris' life. She began writing poetry after college and developed into an accomplished poet, publishing four books. She was a longtime member of the Poetry Society of Texas and the Poets of Tarrant County. Many of her poems focused on people and the aspects of their lives that she found fascinating.

DeLoris truly cared about people and wanted to learn about every person she met. She had a life-long commitment not only to her own education but others, as she established scholarships at multiple colleges and supported many individuals in their college education. She also enjoyed teaching adult literacy students.

DeLoris also helped people through her work for several decades as a Trustee of the David L. Tandy Foundation. Further, she enjoyed her membership in the Fort Worth Women's Club, including The Cadmean Club.

A lifelong Methodist, religious education was important to DeLoris. She taught a Bible Study at her UMW group at First Methodist Church in Fort Worth for many years, and she produced religious programs with two friends at a Fort Worth nursing home. At the time of her death, DeLoris was a member of North Scottsdale UMC.

DeLoris had a great fondness for being near the water, and she and Erwin enjoyed taking cruises in Europe, Mexico, Alaska, Canada, Hawaii, the Caribbean, and points in between. She also enjoyed traveling to spend time with family, friends, and attending other social events.

DeLoris is preceded in death by her parents and a brother, David. Survivors include her husband of 51 years, Erwin; two sons, Trent (wife Amy) of Pflugerville, TX, and Paul (wife Karen) of Scottsdale, Ariz.; a grandson Ethan of Scottsdale, Ariz.; a brother Emmett Duemke (wife Marsha) of Estes Park, Colo.; and numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins.

Private memorial services were held at Greenwood Chapel in Fort Worth, following entombment there.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorials be made to either the Poetry Society of Texas or the General Scholarship Fund at Texas Wesleyan University.

Condolences may be sent to:

Mr. Erwin Whitney
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