



Joan E. Wilts

February 19, 1929 - September 10, 2021

Joan Wilts, an amazing woman of her generation, passed away peacefully surrounded by family on Friday, September 10th. She had a much longer life, at ninety-two years, than she ever expected, and the world was glad for it!

She was the first from her Glencoe family to attend both college and graduate school. She did not originally intend to go to college, but her fellow students at New Trier voted, and awarded her a scholarship. She is a proud alumnus of Lake Forest College, and supported the school throughout her lifetime.

Her boundless curiosity found a perfect path as a librarian, receiving her degree from Rosary College, and then teaching there for a number of years. She worked at the Lake Forest College library and also for the Illinois library system. She founded the first library in Lake Zurich and the Warren Newport library in Gurnee, Illinois. She also served at the Waukegan Public Library with many colleagues that became life-long friends.

She positively impacted thousands of people's lives through the co-founding of the Literacy Volunteers of Lake County. LVLC originally helped hundreds of people learn to read and write in English, but then evolved with the times to help new people in Lake County to read and write in Spanish as well.

Throughout her life, her curiosity in all things led her to help many as a

reference librarian. Helping people find jobs, write resumes, and find answers to life's many questions. She helped countless students find materials and sources at the last minute in order to craft papers which appeared well researched and received high marks; of this her children can certainly attest.

Her curiosity was not just for knowledge and truth, but also for people. Her genuine interest was sincerely felt by her friends and community. She made a difference by supporting and guiding everyone she knew in an understated manner that came from a place of love.

Over the last few weeks, the outpouring of support and love from all of those people has made a big difference to her family. Many people shared how she was "a true intellectual", "the smartest person I knew", and how "she was so kind and giving". Friends visited and were with her through her last few weeks, and she made many new friends who provided care over the last three months.

Her steadfast love and hope for humanity, and the earth, manifested itself throughout her life through everything she did. She was a longtime member of the Washburn Congregational Church, Altrusa, the Civil War Roundtable, and the Heather Ridge community group. Her quiet advocacy for "doing the right thing" made a difference everywhere she went.

She also was a keen fan of the Cubs and loved all of the dogs who were in her life.

She is survived by her daughter Laura (Howard) Perlow and her son David (Renee Cortez), as well as her grandchildren whom she loved dearly, Alec and Ethan Perlow; Gelsey and Ian Maslanka; and Harrison Wilts. She was predeceased by her loving husband of 49 years, Richard Wilts. She will be lovingly and wonderfully remembered and sorely missed by all.

A celebration of her life will be held at a later date.

Memorial contributions may be made in her name to any of the following organizations: Lake Forest College, Orphans of the Storm (Riverwoods, IL), or the Waukegan Public Library Foundation.