

Mary Joan Kuypers Farver

Mary Joan Kuypers was born in her family home in Pella, Iowa, on November 17, 1919. She passed away peacefully at her home in Pella, surrounded by family, on February 27, 2017. She was 97. Joan was the first child of E. Lucille Gaass Kuypers and Peter H. Kuypers and had one brother, H. Stuart Kuypers. She was a bright child who showed an early love of music, particularly the piano and organ. Joan pursued a music degree at Grinnell College, graduating in 1941. Playing the organ was a challenge she enjoyed, but in her heart, she cherished her Steinway grand piano, a gift from her father. Throughout her life, she moved it from home to home.

During World War II, when Joan's brother Stu was stationed in Washington D.C., she moved there to be near him and found work as a secretary. It was there that she met Stu's roommate, Paul Farver, and a romance developed. Joan and Paul were married in 1945 and moved back to Pella. Paul worked at Rolscreen Company (now Pella Corporation), a thriving window and door manufacturing company founded by Joan's father in 1925. Together, Joan and Paul raised three children: Mary, Charles and Suzanne. Joan balanced devotion to her family along with her enthusiastic participation in many community organizations including Garden Club, Second Reformed Church, PEO, and the Pella Historical Society.

Following the untimely death of her brother, Stu, in 1980, and her father, Pete, in 1981, Joan became Chairman of the Board of Rolscreen Company at the age of 61. She never had aspired to lead the company, yet she accepted this responsibility with the same grace and style that she showed in all aspects of her life. In 1995, she became Chair Emerita, and her regular factory walks were replaced with rides in a golf cart. Everyone at Pella Corporation was family to her, as well as many others in her hometown and beyond.

Later in life, Joan's modest, but firm determination served her well. She served on various boards, including Central College, Iowa Public Television, Iowa Children's and Family Services and the Iowa College Foundation, as well as the P. H. and E. Lucille Gaass Kuypers Foundation and the Pella Rolscreen Foundation. These endeavors broadened her charitable and family-centered interests.

Joan received many awards in her lifetime, including an honorary doctorate from Central College, Pella's Hall of Fame Community Service Award, and the prestigious Ellis Island Medal of Honor, which recognized her lifetime achievements, contributions to society, and dedicated support of her family's Dutch heritage.

Joan recognized the importance of balancing hard work and recreation. She was an avid skier and golfer for much of her life. She enjoyed spending time with her family on the ski slopes of Colorado into her late 70s. Joan also played golf well into her later years, always finding a way to make a good shot, but mostly enjoying the beauty of nature on a sunny day. On Sundays, Joan went to church and was a lifelong member of the Second Reformed Church in Pella, singing in the choir and even playing the organ on occasion. Music always made her smile, and classical music filled her home on most days.

Joan is honored by her family members who remain: daughter Mary Griffith and her husband, Jim; son Charles Farver and his wife, Karen; daughter Suzanne Farver and her husband, Clint Van Zee; eight grandchildren: Chip Griffith, Amy Charters (John), Meg Ralston (Aaron), Adam Farver (Melissa), Jacob Farver (Claire), Ben Farver (Meaghan), Louisa Berky and Madeline Berky; and ten great-grandchildren: Emma and Ellie Charters, Parker and Colter Ralston, Will and Anna Kate Farver, Holt and Frances Gray Farver, and Arlo and Maeve Farver. Joan is also honored by nephew Pete Kuyper (Jackie) and niece Carol Kuyper Rosenberg; great-nephews Michael Kuyper (Jill), Bryce Kuyper and Richard Rosenberg; great-niece Angie Rosenberg; and great-great nephews Timothy and Daniel Kuyper, and Camden Juhlin.

Joan's life exemplified integrity, generosity and love. She will be dearly missed by her family, her Pella Corporation 'family,' and all who knew her.