

Lillian Cole – MS 1978 Counseling and Guidance

Age 92 – Fargo, ND

Lillian Osterhus Cole died peacefully at the Fargo Sanford Hospice House after a three-year battle with pancreatic cancer. She was diagnosed the week of her 90th birthday and chose to fight cancer the same way that she lived her life: with strength, grace, hope, and fortitude. Lillian was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. She was the daughter of Gustav and Esther Daniels Osterhus. Her parents immigrated to the United States from coastal towns in southern Norway. The Osterhus family spent their summers at their home in Quonochontaug, Rhode Island, where they spent countless hours gardening, socializing, and enjoying their time at East Beach.

Lillian received a Bachelor of Arts Degree from St. Olaf College in 1951. It was there she met Howard Cole. The evening of their college graduation, St. Olaf's reigning Snow Queen married the Student Body President. They began their lives together in St. Paul, Minnesota, while Howard attended Luther Theological Seminary. She and Howard spent the next several years in Missouri, New York, Germany, and California while Howard served as a Chaplain in the US Army. They moved to Red Wing, Minnesota, in 1959 when Howard accepted his first call at United Lutheran Church. In 1967, they moved to Fargo, as Howard served at First Lutheran Church for 14 years. Lillian was active in the Association of Lutheran Church Women, Abigail Bible Study, the Befrienders and sang in the First Lutheran Cathedral Choir.

In 1978, Lillian received a master's degree in counseling and guidance from North Dakota State University. She joined the staff of NDSU's Counseling Center and served as a Career Counselor. She loved her job and excelled at engaging with the students as they planned their future academic and career paths. In 1994, she was recognized by her peers for outstanding achievement and exceptional contributions in her field. Lillian retired from NDSU in 1999. Lillian married Mark Foss in July of 1999. They enjoyed their time together traveling, attending numerous University of North Dakota events, and spending time at their lake home on Little MacDonald Lake. Foss family gatherings were always exceptionally delightful events for Lillian and Mark.

Life was an ongoing adventure for Lillian. She was a voracious reader and often alternated between mysteries and biographies.

She had a passion for continuous learning and loved to attend lectures and community arts events. The internet provided her with endless opportunities for research and education. She was an advocate for causes that encouraged empowering women and feeding the hungry. Lillian was active with her bible study group, PEO Chapter, and as a member of St. Olaf's Alumni fund-raising committee. She served as the designated social chairwoman with her girlfriends and loved organizing group dinners and social events.

As Lillian began the final chapter of her life, she was blessed with a companion and fiancé, Norman Jones. She and Norman enjoyed wonderful conversations, dinners, and a nurturing companionship.

Lillian leaves a legacy of "living a good life". We will miss her laughter, her encouraging words, and her unfailing love. Lillian's strong faith provided her with courage and strength, trusting that God is forever with us.

She was preceded in death by her parents, her daughter, Marilyn Beth, brother Herman Osterhus, and Howard Cole and Mark Foss.

She leaves behind her children David Cole, Steven Cole (Pam), both of Fargo, and Laurie Ness (Dan), of Belmont, North Carolina; fiancé Norman Jones; stepchildren Mark Foss (Sharon Eckert), Meg Foss (Jim Lebovitz), Maureen Wollak (Pat), Melanie Akason (Jim), Sheila Foss, Lisa Ritter (Bill), and Tom Foss (Linda); step-grandchildren Sydney, Torie, and Thomas Ness, Sean Foss (Jessica), Hayden Foss, Emily Yanish (Lance), Briana Lebovitz, Mandee Kilsdonk (Bradly), Cody Akason (Meri), Trevor Akason (Sara), Tristan Akason, Kelly Wollak and Bridget Daveau (Adam). She also leaves behind her sister-in-law Carol Osterhus, nieces Kristin Marshall, Kari Lacey, and Elise Carlson, and nephews David, Brian, and Craig Osterhus.

We would like to thank her doctors at the Roger Maris Cancer Center for their excellent care. In addition, we are forever grateful for the compassionate care that she received from the members of Sanford Hospice.

A service of remembrance will be held on Tuesday, July 11, 2023, at 11:00 AM, with a visitation one hour prior at First Lutheran Church, Fargo. A private burial will be held at Riverside Cemetery.