



## Nancy Ann Campbell

July 28, 1929 - January 7, 2019

Nancy Ann Cornforth Campbell died on January 7, 2019. While she did not wish to leave this world or her family, in her final months she often exclaimed how lucky she had been. One of the last things she said was that she had lived a wonderful life.

By an accident of her father's traveling job, Nancy was born in Centerville, Iowa, on a date she relished reciting, 7/28/29. But she was a Coloradan to the core, as were her mother, grandmother, and great-grandparents (who had arrived by 1873). By the time she was five, she was settled where she mostly stayed, in Denver.

Nancy graduated from East High, then attended Grinnell College for three semesters. Soon after the end of the war, she met and (in December 1948) married Laird S. Campbell, then moved with him to Lawrence, Kansas, so he could complete his law degree and she could continue classes. When he finished, they returned to Denver to live first in Park Hill, then Virginia Vale, then near Yale and Holly. During those years, in addition to raising four children, Nancy finished college at DU and began teaching as a substitute, then as a fifth grade teacher at Greenwood Elementary, a job she loved. In 2012, she and Laird moved to Fort Collins to be closer to their daughter; he died three months later, and so she spent her final six years a widow.

Many of the themes set in her childhood continued throughout Nancy's life. What tied them together was her interest in and love for other people.

When her father died suddenly in 1935, leaving a young widow with three children in the middle of the Depression, six-year-old Nancy promised to look after the family—then spent the next eight decades tending a large circle of care. With patience, creativity, good humor, and heart, she raised four children and one grandchild, and for some months at a time took in two adult sons and their families. She cooked, sewed, decorated, made repairs, and grew flowers. She nursed her own mother through her final illness and looked after her two grandmothers in Denver and (long-distance) Laird's mother and aunts. She read to a blind bed-ridden client of Laird's. She befriended, housed, and cared for two

young French teachers who taught at the resident grandchild's school. In her final years, she cared as best she could for her many wonderful caretakers, listening to their stories and sometimes their problems and sharing bits of her own.

When she was about seven, Nancy began taking piano lessons. By high school, she was collecting popular song sheet music and playing for her friends. Later she accompanied the chorus at Greenwood and the state historical society's fashion shows, where she matched the music to the vintage of clothing. She played for Laird and for her children, grandchildren, and caretakers—right up to her last week. Both she and Laird loved classical music, and it filled the air of all her homes.

By junior high, she had begun her long career of volunteer civic engagement. With the characteristic slogan "Don't be fancy, vote for Nancy," she was elected 8th grade class president at Morey. She joined the Rainbow Girls and after a few years, as president or "Worthy Advisor," she was leading this organization of some 500 girls. She was a Cub Scout den mother and active in the PTA. At her life-long church, First Plymouth Congregational (United Church of Christ), she taught Sunday School, joined the education board, led the effort to start its first nursery school, and became the first woman to chair that board. She raised lots of money for the United Way, including from businesses near Stapleton Airport and along the Platte River valley near downtown. She joined the Denver branch of the national Reading for the Blind, then became chair of its Board of Directors. She volunteered with the Colorado Historical Society's education department, where she developed an "Early Denver" class around the museum's large 1860 model of the city. She became president of the volunteers of that society, a job that included organizing the Christmas tours of the Governor's Mansion. One result of this association was her "study group," a dozen or so friends who met monthly for an expedition followed by lunch: after decades of these events, Nancy had toured nearly every major civic building and every museum, and had eaten lunch seemingly everywhere.

According to her mother, her father's work meant that Nancy went to every one of the then 48 states during her first year. Perhaps these early wanderings helped set her fondness for exploring, travel, and the outdoors. In part through the active youth program at First Plymouth, she took frequent weekend expeditions out of the city (this didn't have to be far: Colorado Boulevard was not yet paved) and attended summer camp as camper and counselor. At La Foret (in Colorado's Black Forest), and briefly later at Skyland (near Crested Butte), she rode horses, hiked, and made lifelong friends; she met Laird at La Foret, and they spent their first year of marriage helping to open Skyland. (With lasting impact, they later sent all their children and grandchildren to Skyland and similar later camps.) As their finances and schedules opened up, she traveled (mostly with Laird) all

over Colorado, to many parts of the U.S., and to Canada, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Peru, Chile, England, Scotland, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, and France. And she relished the travels and adventures of her children and grandchildren.

Preceded in death by her husband Laird and son David, Nancy is survived by her brother Keith Cornforth and his wife Martha, by her sister Susan Thran (all of Minden, NV), and by their children; by her daughter SueEllen and husband John Calderazzo (Bellvue, CO); by son David's widow Nzali Mbewe Campbell (Denver) and grandchildren Lea Campbell Pickering (the granddaughter Nancy and Laird largely raised, Cheyenne), Joy (Boston), Ian (Cortez), and Amy (Boulder); by son Douglas and his wife Viviana (San Bartolo, Peru) and grandchildren Carey (Peru), Elizabeth (Puerto Rico), Clayton (Washington, DC), and Teresa (Peru); by son Bruce (Rolling Meadows, IL), grandchildren Alexandra, Elaine, and Lucia (all in the Chicago area), and former daughter-in-law Helen Jacobsen (Evanston, IL); and by four great-grandchildren.

Nancy used to joke that her epitaph should be "She tried hard," and to her last days she felt that she had not yet done enough for others. She certainly did always try hard. But what her friends and family will remember is her kindness, her lively interest in everyone she met and in the larger world, her sweet cheerfulness, the way she made friends everywhere, her unending care for those around her. She left this world afloat on a sea of love.

There will be a memorial service at First Plymouth Congregational Church in Denver, 3501 South Colorado Blvd., on Saturday February 2 at 2:00 pm.



# Comments

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“ Nancy Bonhomme Fleury purchased the Be My Love Bouquet with Red Roses for the family of Nancy Ann Campbell.



Nancy Bonhomme Fleury - January 25, 2019 at 02:26 AM

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“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Nancy Ann Campbell.



January 18, 2019 at 11:20 AM

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“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Nancy Ann Campbell.



January 16, 2019 at 05:56 PM

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“ Even the few times we visited with Nancy in southwest Colorado it was easy to see the interest & care she showed all, including us. Her character shows through in all the Campbells we have grown to care for and admire. We know she will live in your hearts always.

With love,  
Brad & Terry Wayt



**Terry Wayt** - January 16, 2019 at 12:01 PM

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“ I will always remember all the wonderful moments spent with Nancy ,Laird and the whole family 34 years ago. I will always remember them as my "second family". Laird and Nancy were both so kind, generous and the year spent with them as a resident French teacher was a wonderful experience.  
Condolences to all the family  
Nancy Bonhomme-Fleury

**Nancy Fleury** - January 15, 2019 at 03:58 PM

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“ I will always be grateful for the opportunity I had 30 years ago to spend a year living with Nancy and Laird as one of their two resident French teachers. I learned so much from them about Colorado, the English language, American government, and a myriad of other things. They were both incredibly kind and generous people and I have been missing having them in my life these past few years.  
Nancy will stay in a special place in my heart. I would like to offer my condolences to all her family.  
Isabelle Marques

**Isabelle Marques** - January 14, 2019 at 03:03 PM

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“ What a sweet, gentle and loving soul! I'm sure she'll be her family's guardian angel from above! I enjoyed listening to her stories of raising her family, teaching , traveling and of how proud she was of her whole family. What a genuine soul. May you Rest In Peace, Miss Nancy! -Bry Soja

**Bry Soja** - January 14, 2019 at 10:56 AM

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“ Nancy was our neighbor across the street in Holly Hills. She and Laird became fast friends. We were 'garden buddies'; we watched each other's homes; shared meals and looked out for each other. One of my fondest memories is when we got our carpets cleaned and they watched our dog for a few hours. Nancy said that Marcus

laid down by Laird's chair, but if Nancy got up, he would follow her around. Nancy and I went for tea, went on home tours in Denver and really enjoyed each other's company. We visited them often after they moved into the retirement community at Evans and Colorado. I'm sorry I won't be able to attend the service on February 2nd. Laird and Nancy were wonderful people and I feel blessed to have had them in my life. Please know that my thoughts are with your family. Barbara Hall

**Barbara Hall** - January 13, 2019 at 11:43 AM



“ Thank you, Barb. I had you in mind as I had the notice placed in the Post. A photo we all like of the two of them was taken in your backyard, perhaps by you, so you have remained present by proxy. SueEllen

**SueEllen Campbell** - January 13, 2019 at 07:38 PM



“ I have many memories with my grandmother.  
I will write my top 3.

1. When we lived in colorado, she took my sister and I do the doll house mesume. We all dressed up with skirts and a nice blouses. The meaume was filled with antique dolls and my grandmother knew all about them. We had tea and cookies. It was a wonderful afternoon.

2. sprinklers: grandpa and granny would put the sprinklers on during hot summers. After many hours of water and fun, granny would give us a fruit popsicle and grandpa would call us silly bees.

3. When she came to viste us in Peru, after a late dinner...she knocked at my door...woke me up slightly just to say "I love you"

4. When I was in college, I went to viste them a weekend. As when I was young we would watch the Lawrence Welk show. I would have grape nuts and granny would move her foot to the music. She would sometimes play the notes with her fingers.

5. With the birth of all my children, granny gave me an incredible gift! A stocking made by her. They are beautiful, filled with love and will be treasured.

**carey campbell** - January 12, 2019 at 01:54 PM



“ Nice memories, Carey. Thank you for sharing them. Aunt SE

**SueEllen Campbell** - January 13, 2019 at 07:39 PM



“ 2 files added to the album Memories Album



**Kristin Bohlender** - January 11, 2019 at 08:42 PM