



Darlene June Schnorr

June 29, 1932 - May 30, 2026

Many people search for years to know what their lives are about. Our Mom was clear minded about the things that were dear to her: music, flowers, and predominantly, her family.

Darlene June Rutz came into the world in Windsor, Colorado, on an 84-degree day, June 29, 1932. On Saturday, May 30, 2026, during a beautiful spring morning, she gently stepped away from us. In her almost 94 years, Mom experienced happy school days, found the best guy in the world to marry, raised a kind-hearted family, and lived a long enough life to be able to reflect fondly on her contributions to the world.

Mom grew up on Walnut Street in Windsor, Colorado, and to say her childhood was idyllic would be an understatement! She lovingly recalled a fun, carefree time as a kid growing up during the Great Depression. A small town at that time, Windsor afforded Mom the freedom to “run the neighborhood”, playing Kick the Can and maybe swiping a few watermelons in the summer months with a group of friends that remained close throughout their lives. Family time was spent with her parents, William and Katherine Rutz, and her older sister and best friend, Verna. This was the time Mom found her favorite thing in the world, the piano. She started piano with a neighbor who charged 25 cents per lesson, and that sealed a lifetime love of music. Starting as church organist at age 13, Mom accompanied countless worship, wedding,

and funeral services, and then continued as organist in various churches for the next 7 decades.

As most kids do, Mom found her place in high school, and of course, hers was in the music area. Her band teacher entered her in numerous piano competitions and clinics at UNC, where she never failed to be graded as superior. In addition to being the school accompanist, Mom tackled a new, unfamiliar instrument, the bass fiddle. Her teacher gave her the go-ahead to take it home over the summer, and when school started up again, the band had an accomplished bass player standing in the back row. But one more thing! Prior to graduating in 1950, yet another music activity beckoned her. The Windsor Wizards marching band took a big step forward when Mom as drum major led the band down the streets in many a parade. A woman before her time.

Mom would have been UNC bound as a music major except for an encounter during her tenure as a soda jerk at Leiser's Corner Drug at 4th and Main in Windsor. A tall, slender, dark-haired handsome young farmer named Roland Schnorr walked into the drug store for a pack of cigarettes. He leaned up against the counter and Mom handed him his Camels along with the incorrect change, starting their love story for the next 56 years. She would say lovingly throughout her life, "I can still see him leaning against that counter." Quite scandalous to Mom's older relatives, Dad was five years her senior, but nonetheless, Roland and Darlene were married on August 19, 1951, at St. John's Lutheran Church.

This was 100% true love. Any "city girl" who would leave modern-day conveniences for a drafty farmhouse without indoor plumbing had to be head-over-heels, madly in love. That little shack near Eaton, Colorado, was their home for 6 years, and it is where their first 2 children were born. It was also the central gathering place for their large group of friends who played cards

and spent carefree hours laughing and sharing their lives. Years later, these life-long friends would often recall they visited the Schnorr home when finances were tight because they knew Mom would feed them.

In 1957, Mom and Dad moved to a farm outside of Fort Collins so barren and desolate, their friends placed a sign on the property that read: "Land of Promise: Schnorr's Place". That it was. But once the landscaping started, it never stopped. If a space was brown, it couldn't escape Mom's green thumb. Gladiola, zinnia, petunias, geraniums, marigolds, any flower you can imagine covered the yard. One flowerbed followed the next, but none was as spectacular as the rose garden that included: Peace, Gold Medal, Touch of Class, Dolly Parton, and Dad's favorite, Mr. Lincoln. Mom was a self-taught gardener who was searched out when people needed guidance for their own rose beds. The ranch house was surrounded with color, and it was not unusual for cars to slow when driving past in admiration.

Those who know agriculture understand the essential underpinning of a successful endeavor is the involvement of the spouse. When Mom was needed to drive a truck during harvest, she was behind the wheel. When meals were needed in the fields during a nonstop day, she delivered them. If weeds needed burning, she navigated the tractor. And if food was needed to feed a hoard of workers during a harvest, she prepared gigantic meals complete with dessert. All this in addition to daily necessary domestic functions, raising 3 kids (Bill, Joyce, and Lynne) and teaching more than 40 piano students each week.

We were so loved in the home our Mom cared for. She made sure our lives were happy and that we were thriving. We never questioned her support and love. She took care of everyone, and that extended to our Dad's 8 siblings. She appreciated them, especially after losing her only sibling, Verna, in 1977.

More times than not, it was her idea to seek out Dad's family for a visit or to gather anyone who could benefit from a meal and companionship. She taught us by example what love looks like.

The music dimmed and the flowers were not as fragrant after July 2, 2008, when Roland passed on and left his bride. It was a challenging and excruciatingly sad time. Nevertheless, Mom put one foot in front of the next and kept moving forward. For years she could still be seen in the garden at 6 AM tending to her beloved roses, and there was always music coming from her studio as she kept up with her piano students. A strong woman, Mom beat breast cancer during this period in her life as well.

When Mom left us on May 30, it was as soft and quiet as a rose petal dropping to the earth. It seemed like this was her path, and she knew just what to do. We miss you, Mom. Thank you for keeping us safe, for showing us the beauty of the world, and for all the music. Hang on tight to Dad, and we'll see you soon. We love you.

Your kids: Bill, Joyce, and Lynne and families

Tribute Wall

MT

“ *Such a beautifully written tribute to your Mother. I would have loved to know her but am lucky to have her son as a friend. God bless your family during this time of grief.*

🌸 *Mary Taylor*

Mary Taylor - 53 minutes ago