



Nona Thayer

February 2, 1932 - December 6, 2018

Nona Thayer, at age 86, passed away in her Fort Collins home of fifty three years on December 6th.

She was born in 1932 in Vancouver, Washington, as the second child of Walt and LaVeta Buker. Her brother, Robert, was two years older. He and his wife, Rosemary, continue to live at the Buker farm.

Nona attended schools in Vancouver, becoming high school sweethearts with Sandy Thayer. Then, they both attended and graduated from Stanford University in Palo Alto, California. Nona graduated in 1954 with a degree in Home Economics with high honors. She immediately began working for Stanford Research Institute.

She left that position at nine months pregnant, soon giving birth to twins: Ann and Eric in 1955. Three years later, Jill was born at Edwards Air Force Base. Troy was born in 1962, also in Palo Alto. With their family complete, Sandy earned a PhD and sought employment.

In 1966, he accepted a position as a professor at Colorado State University in the Mechanical Engineering Department.

While Sandy pursued his career, Nona focused on the home front, raising

their children and volunteering in the community. She was active in the League of Women Voters. She enrolled at CSU earning a Master's Degree in Economics in her late thirties.

Her passion in land use planning in Fort Collins led her to campaign for and become a Larimer County Commissioner from 1976 to 1984. She successfully championed green space, including adding many walking and biking paths in many new parks.

She balanced her career with her most important roles as a wife and mother. She deeply valued education. She drove her kids to the library every other week so that they had a stack of books to read about whatever interested them. She discouraged television such that when lightning destroyed the family's one TV, it was not replaced for years. Instead, she fostered great study skills and homework completion so there was daily time for clubs like 4-H and Scouts. She also encouraged music lessons and practice, pets and their care, and lots of sports related activities, either on teams or individually.

Nona and Sandy purchased a lot in Steamboat Springs in the late 1960's, where they built a large A –frame from a kit, suitable for family plus friends. "The Cabin" was the scene of dozens of Thanksgivings, Christmases, and New Year Eve celebrations, as well as about ten weekends per skiing season. All Thayer's are accomplished downhill and cross-country skiers. Nona skied up to 2007, even after a hip replacement, because she enjoyed it so much.

The SS cabin was also the summer and fall base for hiking. She loved hiking so much her vehicle long displayed a sticker of "Great Minds Think A Hike". Every August, the family enjoyed week-long horseback rides in the nearby mountain wilderness area.

With her children in college and beyond, Nona pursued vegetable gardening

with an ever bigger plot. With any sunny day, she tended her garden and grew an impressive bounty of produce. Nona was a skilled, innovative cook, wanting to eat what she grew in assorted recipes emphasizing vegetables. She was a healthy eater long before it was trendy. Nona ate frozen packets of veggies and raspberries and fresh apple juice from her apple tree all year long. She also tended flowers like iris, daisies, columbines and roses placed in locations she could enjoy. Inside, Nona enjoyed the attached greenhouse that Sandy built for her. She started plants and had many large, healthy ones all year long. As a lifelong seamstress, Nona was gifted in converting fabric into numerous pairs of pajamas and beautiful outfits. She decorated her home with homemade curtains and tablecloths.

Nona picked up long distance bike riding in her late 40's, and enjoyed biking frequently until her mid-70's. Notable was the immense distances she would pedal. It was not unusual for her to go two hundred plus miles in a long weekend. She accomplished several "Ride the Rockies". Perhaps the most amazing feat was when Sandy and she rode over a thousand miles to their fortieth high school reunion in Vancouver, Washington as fifty-eight year olds. Many of their classmates were astonished.

Besides bike trips, Nona and Sandy enjoyed a hundred plus other travel trips, going to all fifty states and to many countries in Europe and Asia as well as New Zealand. They experienced international short-term living in Sweden, Brazil, Japan, Taiwan, and China. They integrated into various cultures with style and ease, becoming conversant in the language and navigating regular life on their own. Nona was often complimented for her ability to orderly manage extended trips with her children even as youngsters and teenagers.

As an empty nester, Nona chose to invest five years of her talents and time in assisting her daughter Jill and son-in-law Vaughan with the management of

their horse breeding business in Windsor, Colorado.

Over the years, Nona thoroughly enjoyed her local friends through many like-minded interests and activities. One was her ladies hiking group. Over the decades, they hiked in Rocky Mountain Park, the Front Range foothills, and in Fort Collins, always enjoying lots of talking over coffees and meals. A second group is her book club which met monthly for many years to discuss fiction and non-fiction works by international authors. A third group is called "The Salon", which was a gathering of politically active women who met at various homes on a monthly basis. They discussed current events and issues and how they could influence candidates, campaigns, and issues. Some of these friends pursued global travel together, before and after Sandy's death in January of 2005.

Throughout Nona's life, even in the final days, she spoke of her great friends.

Another "friend" who must be noted is her dog. After Sandy's death almost thirteen years ago, Nona selected a Springer Spaniel puppy. She named him Bix and trained him to have excellent manners. They enjoyed numerous walks during the days and evenings at each other's side as Nona read a large daily newspaper or watched educational programming. Nona and Bix have been amazingly bonded companions, always close to one another in life and in her dying process from Multiple Myeloma, a type of cancer of the blood.

Nona's legacy will continue through the influence she had in the lives of her children and grand-children. Her children are Ann (Leon) Libby of Florida and Maine, Eric (Kathy) and grandson Wiley of Steamboat Springs, Jill (Vaughan) Cook of Windsor and grand-daughters Bailey and Jamie, and Troy (Penny) of Hailey, Idaho and grandchildren Hayden, Leah and Emily.

To Nona's great happiness, all her children earned college degrees, and all her grandchildren have either earned degrees, or are currently attending college. She was also very happy to have her extended family share her love

for skiing, biking, traveling, environmentalism, animals, and civic duty.

Nona's Celebration of Life Service will be on Saturday, December 15th at 2:30 PM at Bohlender Chapel located at 121 West Olive Street in Fort Collins, just west of College Avenue. Nona's beloved poinsettias will decorate the room. In lieu of formal flowers, you are welcome to bring a poinsettia and take it home with you after the event or make a charitable donation in Nona Thayer's name to ChildSafe, 2001 South Shields Street, Building K, Fort Collins, CO 80526. The family invites all attendees to a reception featuring coffee and light sweets at Bohlender's meeting room.

Online condolences will be welcomed.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

DEC 15. 2:30 PM (MT)

Bohlender Funeral Chapel
121 W. Olive St.
Fort Collins, CO 80524

Tribute Wall

CH

“ *A lovely and gracious presence to all who met her, I only knew Nona through our common friend, Rosalie. Nona was always delightful in conversation, interesting and so interested in others. My deepest condolences to your family.*

Cheryl Hazlitt - December 25, 2018 at 01:15 AM



“ *I send our condolences and gratitude for the many years of service Nona Thayer gave to the people of Larimer County. Many of the wonderful things we enjoy today in our community are a result of the foundation she created and the good example of public service she set during her terms in office.*

*Steve Johnson
Chairman, Board of County Commissioners
Larimer County*

Steve Johnson - December 14, 2018 at 04:43 PM

DS

“ Occasionally in one’s life we have the opportunity to cross paths with a superlative person.

I was privileged to be asked by Nona to help Sandy build a solar greenhouse on thier home in the 1980s. My interactions with both Sandy and Nona was a great experience for a young designer and builder. Through our work together I learned much.

I had also admired Nona’s role as county commissioner where she wisely and bravely charted a new course in county politics.

She was a fantastic model for the many different roles that she played in her life.

It’s an honor to know someone who made such a positive impact during her life.

Dennis Sovick

Dennis Sovick - December 14, 2018 at 10:08 AM

KM

“ I would like to express my sympathy to all of you in the death of Nona. My thoughts and prayers are with you. My memories that I would like to share is that when I moved from Denver to Ft. Collins in 1968, Nona’s daughter Ann, was the first person I met in Math class. From that point on, Nona and Sandy always included me in countless outings to the cabin in Steamboat to ski and hike. Giving me tow tickets and giving me Ann’s old skis when she got a new pair is something I have never forgotten. Seven years ago, I had the opportunity to come and help the family out when she was going to have home dialysis. None of the children to come home, so I came from Lincoln, NE to do this for her. It was something I had never done before, but I learned fast. During this month, we enjoyed many talks. How exciting to know that that we were enjoying each other’s company once again. Ann and I have been friends for 50 years and talk and see each other quite often. Your family is something I will cherish forever. May god bless all of you. Kristie Meints

Kristie Meints - December 13, 2018 at 08:56 PM

MH

“ I knew Nona through our hiking group. She was a strong hiker and biker and had a wonderful sense of humor.

Marilyn Heller - December 12, 2018 at 09:27 AM

NG

“ We met Nona and Sandy in 1967 at the Westminster Presbyterian Church in FC. They were a lively addition to our lively Sunday School class. Later, we'd see each other regularly, and they invited me to dinner at their compound in Jinan, China in 1987. Nona also asked me to serve on a county board. Her life was amazing.

Neil Grigg, Fort Collins

Neil Grigg - December 12, 2018 at 06:51 AM

SC

“ I can't remember if I met Nona through the League of Women Voters or Democratic Party activities, but I do remember the Times. The late '60's and early 70's. I was not long out of college and had a new baby. Watching her calm, caring competence gave me hope that I, too, might accomplish great things in due time. I have always been grateful to her and mourn her loss.

Shelley Calisher - December 10, 2018 at 12:12 PM

JS

“ To the Thayer Family, I remember your Mother when we lived on West Lake Street and our son Mack and Eric were good friends while attending Bennett Elementary School. I knew your Mother as a good neighbor and during her campaign for County Commissioner. I always admired her work and all she accomplished. Peace to all of you, Joyce Sjogren

Joyce Sjogren - December 09, 2018 at 10:34 PM