



Lea Cathers

April 30, 1926 - March 4, 2021

Born in Los Angeles, CA in 1926, Lea passed quietly in her sleep at home on March 4, 2021. She will be remembered as a woman who lived life with grace and on her own terms. She grew up the youngest of three daughters of Margaret and Cecil Palmateer, in Litchfield Park, AZ, where in 1943 she married her beloved husband of 63 years, Army Air Corps Captain (later Major) Benjamin Earl Cathers. They started their family shortly after the war, and lived in Kansas, Texas, Maryland, Virginia and Arizona, returning to Chester, Virginia – her favorite place to live – for their final years. Lea was a devoted homemaker and an avid traveler. She loved taking trips throughout North America towing an Airstream trailer. Later, she broadened her travels to include trips, often solo, to Asia (Thailand and China), Europe, and Central America (through the Panama Canal). Well into her 94th year she could be seen riding her lawn tractor to tend the extensive property surrounding the Chester home she loved. In later years, her research of family genealogy revealed that she is a descendant of Shenandoah Valley settler, Jost Hite. On any given day she would happily share her views on the two subjects most important to her: religion (Christian Science) and politics (Republican). Lea is survived by her sister, Bette Margaret Sargent of Seal Beach, California; four children, Benjamin David (Laura) of Richmond; Jon Patrick (Pen) of Mississippi; Lou Michelle Nanouche (Rachid) of Paris; Rebecca Lea Jackson of Arizona; 10 grandchildren; 17 great grandchildren; as well as a loving extended family. She is predeceased by her husband (2006); sister, Hattie Lou Maxfield of California (2005); daughter, Ellen Cathers Ferrell of Georgia (2020); and great-grandson, Avery of Alabama (2018). Lea was an animal lover – most notably elephants and cats. A celebration of her life will be held as a gathering of family and friends at the Richmond Zoo on April 30, 2021. Email CelebrateLea@aol.com to reserve a ticket. No other service will be held. Memorial contributions may be sent in Lea's name to the Richmond Zoo. Cremation arrangements are being handled by JT Morriss & Son in Chester. Private burial will be with her husband at Virginia Veteran's Cemetery in Amelia.

Comments



“ So many great childhood memories of my Aunt Lea. Our big family gatherings in Arizona. My first solo trip, and first solo flight, to visit the Cather's clan in Virginia. Camping, and learning about the difference between a pecan (puh-kaan) and a pee can. Aunt Lea was a very special lady who really knew how to have a good time and always went out of her way to show a good time to others. She will be greatly missed.

Pam Bayer - April 12 at 12:17 AM



“ A friend forever

For the past 18 years Lea has been a special friend to me. We were in touch weekly, sometimes twice a week, and would share on her favorite topics, Christian Science and politics. Though our life-experiences were different in many ways we had much in common, including love of family and challenges of being a single woman head of household living alone. She was always an alert and lively conversationalist. We met only twice. The first time was in NJ, in Michelle's home, where a group of us were gathering. Ben was with her at the time, and I was with my husband. The second time was in 2014 when my friend Cynthia and I decided to take the 10-hour train ride from Hudson, NY to Richmond VA to visit with Lea and Michelle. Lea was a most gracious hostess and tour guide. We visited Monticello, Jamestown and several plantations. It was a trip to remember. Lea, then in her upper eighties, did all the driving! - in her vintage Buick Regal. Lea will be in my heart forever, a good friend and an inspiration for life well-lived.

Mary Julia Kephart

Mary Julia Kephart - March 10 at 10:46 AM



“ J.T. MORRISS & SON FUNERAL HOME
MO

Madeline Oliverio

19 hours ago

We met Lea at Louis and Natalea's wedding.....the only time we saw her. However, we kept in touch with her through mail and email and found her to be an interesting and kind person! Our heartfelt condolences to her family.

Madeline and Dorothy Oliverio

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LS

Lisa Sutter

a minute ago

Lea and Ben were my second parents. They welcomed me into their family with open arms. Michelle and I were best friend's in grade school, and have stayed as friends over the years. Lea was always very kind to me, even when I was a stinker as a young child. As I grew, our relationship grew. It was always a pleasure to visit her, she had great stories of family and travel, and always seemed to have cookies!

My best memory of her was when I was in 6th grade. We had to make a person out of a jar. I made this hideous yellow faced, purple eyed, red lipped, blue toungued monstrosity in a tuxedo with an afro. I named it Orvy after Lea! (Her first name) I always thought it was a cool and different name and seemed to fit perfectly! She was probably motified, but instead found a way to tell me I was "creative". I will always remember that as well as all the trips I went with them on. Lea was always very generous and I came to call her Mom. I feel fortunate to have known her and my life is better because of her.

My condolences to the family - she will be missed greatly.

Lisa Sutter

Lisa Sutter - March 07 at 03:34 PM



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Madeline and Dorothy Oliverio

Madeline Oliverio - March 06 at 08:32 PM



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