

Olivia Yvonne **Jonker**

April 27, 1921 - June 16, 2011





Yvonne's Life Story

Olivia Yvonne Bosman was born April 27, 1921 in Holland's first hospital on 12th St. Throughout her life, she never hesitated to point out that house on the corner of 12th and Central by saying, "That's where I was born." She was the great-granddaughter of Jan Willem Bosman, one of Holland's earliest settlers, and was proud of her heritage as a founding family.

Yvonne began kindergarten at newly built Washington School before graduating from Holland High School in 1938. Later she attended Northwestern University before graduating from the University of Chicago in Medical Records Science. While in school, Vonnie was often in trouble for pranks and practical jokes including taking the leadership to call off school for her entire class one spring afternoon so she could go to her beloved Ottawa Beach where she would swim across the channel to show off her aquatic skills. She loved Lake Michigan throughout her life and enjoyed swimming and boating with her family and her dog, Strike.

Vonnie was a gifted writer and published short stories in Redbook and other magazines during the 1940's and '50's. Throughout her professional life as a hospital administrator, she wrote handbooks and other documents for hospitals in the Detroit Metro Area. Mostly, her family relishes her book, "Tiny Boxes" written in 1995 detailing her memories of a long and fruitful life.

The family remembers Yvonne's stories of running away to Indiana in 1941 to marry Peter Jonker III, her life-long love. Even after Pete had been gone for 20 years, Vonnie would say that she could never imagine any other man in her life. They were married for four months before having the courage to tell the family that Peter had married "an American" who did not attend the Christian Reformed Church!

The family is not sure who recommended to Pete that he drop his partnership with Russ Bowes because there was no future in making hamburgers, but instead the two lived in various Michigan communities while Pete advanced into management at Montgomery Ward. During those early years, Pete would haul Vonnie, the kids, and most of Vonnie's kitchen equipment to various state campgrounds - visiting most of the state parks in Michigan. Pete was devoted to Yvonne all of his life, and became a loving "Boppa" to all the grandchildren.





Boppa's affiliation with Alzheimers Disease created a new life for Yvonne as a caregiver after retirement to Holland in 1979. Throughout it all, Yvonne saw the need to help other caregivers and joined with Marge Hoeksema to establish the Allegan-Ottawa Alzheimer's chapter, growing the chapter from two to over 800 families. Speaking out on the radio, tv, newspapers and even for medical conferences throughout the United States, Yvonne became an expert and an advocate for victims and caregivers of Alzheimers. Two editions of her book, "Alzheimer's, the bottom line," were published in 1995.



Perhaps the event that had the most significant impact on her life and on the life of her family began at the age of nine when she won first prize in an essay contest by the then newly-published "Weekly Reader;" and she was allowed to have a pen-pal in Plymouth, England. That contest was the beginning of a very personal and unique relationship with the British Isles and its people for the rest of her life. In the course of her adult life, she flew over 62 round trips to the United Kingdom and Europe for both business and pleasure. Husband Peter, son Nathan, and daughters Libby and Lu-anne have all travelled to England.



Yvonne's love and many interactions with the U.K. resulted in a significant impact on two subsequent generations creating anglophiles of Nathan, who spent 1966 and 1967 at Coventry Cathedral in Coventry, England, and his daughters Sarah and Katie. Nate's first daughter Sarah Elizabeth has traveled throughout England, on an "around the world" journey, and is currently teaching in Santiago, Chile in South America. Nate's second daughter, Katie, lives in Guilford near London with her husband Paul Chance and Vonnie's second great grandson, Carter Nathan Chance born June 2, 2011.



Although Yvonne attended church with Pete in various Lutheran churches throughout Michigan, she was confirmed at Grace Episcopalian Church in Holland March 2, 1941. She was also a member of Eggbuckland Church of England in Plymouth.

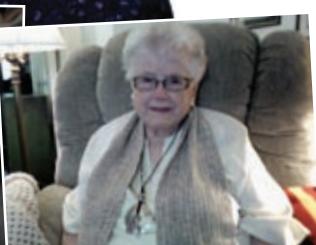


Yvonne is remembered by her family as a mother, a professional woman executive, and as a person with a global view; but mostly the entire family remembers "Chi-Chi," - a loving mother and grandmother. Chi-Chi was a nickname given by the first grandchild, Nick McCormick who was trying to say "Witchy," and it stuck for the rest of her life.

Even non-family members visiting

13th Street came to know her as Chi-Chi or Cheech. In late life, Chi-Chi was represented by a puppet of a witch at all the family events that she could not attend including Ian's wedding in Grand Rapids, Katie's wedding in England, and Andy's wedding in New Orleans.

Granddaughter Sarah remembers that "Chi-Chi" taught them to be yourself, love a lot, and always have fun, especially if it involves being even just a little bit naughty.



Yvonne was preceded in death by her oldest son, Peter Jonker IV who died in 2003 and by her husband of 45 years, Peter Jonker III who passed away in 1986. Also preceding Yvonne were her parents George G. and Ol (von Artmaier) Bosman, and her only siblings, Louise Bosman Brake and Natalie G. Bosman.

Mrs. Jonker was survived by her son Nathan (and Marilyn) Jonker of Clio, Michigan, daughters Libby (and Jeffrey) Belanger of Traverse City, and Libby's twin, Louise Anne Jonker-Mc Cormick (and Tom Shashaguay) of Holland. Beloved grandchildren are: Nicholas M. Mc Cormick now in Seattle; Sarah E. Jonker, a teacher in Santiago, Chile; Katharine L. (Paul, and great-grand son Carter Nathan) Chance of London, England; Ian A (Laura and great grandson Eli) Belanger of Sebring Florida; Andrew J. (Belinda and great-grandson, Josiah) Belanger of Traverse City; and Cameron Peter Belanger of Traverse City.

Visitation will be held at Dykstra Funeral Homes-Downtown Chapel, 29 East 9th Street, Sunday, June 19th from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM with words of prayer offered at 3:30 PM.

Burial will be in Pilgrim Home Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers please consider donations to the Tulip Tree Fund of Hospice of Holland or Alzheimer's Association Greater Michigan Chapter.

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