



Carol Tonette Corkran

November 22, 2024

Carol “Toni” Corkran passed away quietly in Pascoag, RI, on November 22, 2024, following a brief illness. Born May 4, 1938, in California, Toni was the youngest surviving child of Karl and Helen (Belden) Bender, and remained close to her brothers, Brooke and Jerry Bender until their passing.

Growing up in Portland, Oregon, Toni graduated from Clackamas High School where she was on the tumbling team and revelled in the outdoors and being active. She was an adventurous horsewoman when young, and attended both The University of Wyoming and Oregon College of Education with the goal of becoming a Physical Education teacher before a mutual friend introduced her to John Corkran. They were married in 1963 and together raised four children, moving from Oregon to Connecticut, back to Oregon, Colorado, and Washington. In 2007 they retired to John’s childhood hometown of Black Mountain NC.

Toni was a passionate gardener, cultivating fruit trees, vegetables, and a window or two full of houseplants wherever she made a home. Not mere hobbies, her skills allowed her to feed her family, and one of her proudest early “working mom” roles was helping others combine household budgeting and gardening through the University of Oregon’s Cooperative Extension. She was a talented seamstress, sewing herself a stylish wardrobe as a young professional and mom, then clothing for her children and extended family

throughout their lives. In her later years she enjoyed participating in Project Linus, helping create quilts, weighted blankets and vests for those experiencing Autism or other neurological differences.

Toni's idea of vacation always included hiking, camping, and canoeing in a beautiful natural place, whether with four children and an everpresent family dog in a fitted-out GMC Carryall towing a tent trailer, or via fifth wheel with John and a different dog. She knew and loved many state and National Parks throughout the country, with Glacier a favorite. They returned there several times for family reunions at Bowman Lake. She and John also made regular pilgrimages to Middletown, Connecticut, home of their Wesleyan extended family.

Toni discovered a love of reading when her teenagers started bringing home interesting books, and she loved Westerns, biographies, animal husbandry and behavior, and the occasional romance novel. Her curiosity did not wane until her final illness.

Membership in the Lutheran Church supported not only her faith, but desire to contribute, and she served congregations in Portland, Colorado Springs, Seattle and Black Mountain as a member of the Altar Guild, Church Secretary, and in other administrative and clerical roles. She was a no-nonsense administrative assistant to Counsel for Clergy, where she discovered pastors need therapy too.

Toni seemed proudest of her relationships with young people who found her both inspiring and solid, especially young women: a niece who needed her support, a daughter's friend who learned a gardening or sewing trick from her, anyone who asked for her apple pie recipe. Family and friends mattered to her and she tirelessly updated her address book and maintained exhaustive photo collections of and for those in her life. Toni is survived by her children Carol

Corkran, Susan Corkran, and Tim Corkran, Tim's wife Alegra Feldman, and grandsons Jasper Romero and Clinton and Solomon Corkran, Brothers-in-law Rob Corkran and wife Suzanne Forrest and David H. Corkran III and wife Char Corkran. She is survived and fondly remembered by her many nieces and nephews, as well as their families, and many dear friends. Toni was predeceased by her brothers Brooke and Jerome, her husband, John, and her youngest daughter, Laurel Elaine Corkran. A service will be planned for spring, 2025, in Black Mountain, North Carolina.

Donations in her memory may be made in money or in time to a local charity or to Project Linus, at [Make a Donation - Project Linus Project Linus](#).

Tribute Wall

RB

“ It is a memory forever ingrained in my mind - going to Uncle John and Aunt Toni’s Washington home. I was only about 6 or 7 years old but I remember their backyard was so magical! It always makes me smile thinking about those times we got to spend with all of you! Much love to you all!

- Rachel Brown (Evies daughter/Jeromes granddaughter)

Rachel Brown - January 11, 2025 at 12:53 AM

CC

“ 5 files added to the album Memories



Carol M. Corkran - January 03, 2025 at 05:58 PM

EJ

“ So many memories....certainly Toni at Thanksgiving, her booming voice, her strength of character. What I remember most of all is that when Toni was around, people laughed and had FUN! She was a gorgeous woman, with a spirit to match. I am so glad that you all lived out in Portland long enough for us to get to know her over the years.

Elizabeth R Jolley - January 01, 2025 at 07:59 PM



Oh that means so much! I am not ready to not be able to chat with her.

Carol M. Corkran - January 03, 2025 at 05:56 PM