



Jean Marilyn McAlister Carlson

February 9, 1946 - March 20, 2026

Jean Marilyn (McAlister) Carlson – beloved mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, sister, aunt and friend – passed away after a two-year battle with Lewy Body Dementia on March 20, 2026, leaving behind a legacy of compassion and warmth that will continue to shape generations.

Marilyn was born on February 9, 1946, in Passaic, New Jersey, to Jim and Bunny McAlister. As a child, her family moved often, so she found herself attending many schools in various states (among them New Jersey, Pennsylvania and her beloved Michigan), all the while her faith in Jesus remained the one unchanging and steady cornerstone of her life.

After graduating from Boonton High School in 1964, while attending Taylor University in Upland Indiana, she met and married the father of her children, Peter Carlson. The Navy relocated them to San Diego, CA where her first daughter, Amy, was born. Shortly after that, the family of three relocated to Wheaton, IL where second daughter, Sheri, was born. Even though Pete's job eventually included relocation to Norcross, GA, where Marilyn has lived since 1980, her heart has always and forever belonged to and in Wheaton, where lifelong friendships began and flourished, even to this day. Eventually, Marilyn continued her studies at Georgia State Perimeter College, obtaining her BS, RN degree in 1988 and became a lifelong nurse, both in hospital (med-surg) and private office settings. She deeply loved her patients and their families right up until her retirement.

If you spent any time around Marilyn, you no doubt heard about the great

loves of her life – her pups, SNOW, chocolate (and butter and coffee!) her daughters, and, above all else, her six grandchildren (and now the first great-grandson). From frosting Christmas cookies every single year at her house, to her special “grandma cake,” and apple pie recipe, she was one who deeply loved her Dutch heritage and family traditions. She insisted that she did not possess a green thumb and yet she was surrounded by meticulously cared-for and thriving houseplants – partially responsible for inspiring one grandchild to pursue degrees in the area of horticulture and fostering a love of tending to living things in all of her grandchildren. Her love of cooking and creating carried through to all of her grandchildren in their own unique pursuits even to this day.

Her heart was always tender toward the weak, the vulnerable and the suffering, regularly being found scattering seed for birds through the winter months, feeding wild bunnies, squirrels and deer in her yard (much to the chagrin of her neighbors, I’m sure!); and bringing wounded animals (even an opossum!) to the vet for help. She was the picture of compassion in that way and showed such mercy toward any creature who was suffering.

Marilyn is survived by her two daughters: Amy Noel Fatzinger (Shane) and Sheri Jean Gilbert (Sean); her six grandchildren: Brendan Fatzinger (Gina), Elijah Fatzinger, Zeke Fatzinger, Hannah Gilbert Scholl (Caleb), Emily Gilbert and Grayson Gilbert, and her great-grandson Jonathan Fatzinger. She is also survived by her sister, Joan McAlister Mathis (Jim) of Gaylord, MI and her brother, Jim McAlister (Wendy) of Marietta, GA and her beloved nieces and nephews, cousins and dear friends.

Her family would like to acknowledge the faithful care Marilyn received from the staff of Oaks at Braselton Assisted Living and the Inspire Hospice Care team – their kindness will not be forgotten.

Memorial contributions can be made to:

Eagle Ranch

PO Box 7200

Chestnut Mountain, GA 30502

www.eagleranch.org

Tribute Wall

MP

“ *My friendship with Marilyn originated as co-ed students at Taylor University. It was the beginning of a life long cherished sisterhood we shared through the ebb and flow of life. Our countless conversations flavored with breathless laughter to uncontrollable tears, followed by the promise to pray for each other through the present turmoil. We shared our families, her girls, my boys, and the activities that drew us to pray for our children together. Marilyn was my loyal ‘go to’ for a giggle or an advice session to meet the moment. She cared deeply for her family and friends with cards and personal notes. Her sensitive nature was a gift to freely forgive and love beyond any circumstance. As life unfolded, Marilyn’s faith was steady even through her declining health. My dear friend a faithful warrior, a beautiful friend, and now rejoicing at the feet of Jesus, our Resurrected Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Celebrating Easter with all her loved ones ... unspeakable joy!!!!*

Marilyn Barr Petersen - March 30 at 10:41 PM

MB

“ *Ms. Marylyn as I affectionately called her, was such a loving, funny and calm lady. She would always compliment me on the care given to her. It was such an absolute pleasure knowing and caring for her. I was on vacation when i got the sad new. Although I will miss seeing her sweet smiling face again I take comfort in knowing that she is now resting with her father in Heaven. My sincere condolences to her family. May her sweet soul rest in eternal peace.*

Monique Burrows - March 28 at 10:51 PM