

Jean Lucille Van Dyke

April 3, 1931 ~ February 22, 2026

Jean Lucille Van Dyke (94) passed away on February 22, 2026. She possessed a spark of life that cheered anyone in her company—an intangible light that warmed you from the inside out. One family member was fond to say, “Wherever Jean went, she became the student body president.” No campaign necessary, her magnetism naturally drew you in to her circle of friendship with no judgement—just whole-hearted acceptance. She loved you, and you loved her—it was effortless. Because of this, virtually everyone she associated with, even for a brief time, became her friend.

Jean was quick to flash a smile and express compliments to those around her and so one never tired of her company. Further, she laughed. She laughed a lot. Never at you, always with you. And she did not take herself so seriously that she could not laugh at herself. She did that often, and it endeared you to her all the more. Not surprising then, she was the life of every gathering. Her vivacious spirit folded into yours to lift, build, and affirm the best in you.

Jean was born on April 3, 1931, in Ogden, Utah, to Derrah Bingham Van Dyke and Lucille Sessions Van Dyke. It was evident that her esteem for her father, a prominent Ogden attorney and judge, was so lofty that her words to describe him necessarily fell short of the immense love she felt for him. He was always agreeable, gentle, and quick-witted much of which was emulated in Jean’s persona. Her mother was affable yet somewhat somber. Her abiding awareness of the family’s means amidst the Great Depression was ever observable in her management of the household. This allowed Jean opportunities not available to most. She became something of a child virtuoso on the violin performing at venues from Ogden to Salt Lake City. Jean’s only brother, Wayne—two years her elder—assured her that he would be her protector. From first grade through high school, she knew she was safe. She never forgot his promise and spoke of it through ensuing decades. The combined influences of her father, mother, and brother resulted in a happy daughter that was warm in relationships, unwavering in responsible use of her resources, and self-assured.

Jean was drawn to education during her university training. Upon graduation she entered the field and spent decades teaching elementary school children, usually third graders. It is not surprising that her approach to teaching was animated and pleasing. In the early years of her career she traveled to Europe with a cohort of educators and taught in Germany for the 1956-57 school year. This uncommon journey is one more illustration of Jean’s energetic zest for life.

Jean spent sixty-five years with her best friend, Shirley Crookston (1929-2025), who was also an educator. As a team, these two teachers complimented each other in every way. Their home was a hamlet where friends gathered to drink in their hospitality. None of their parties were more exultant than the 1985 bash where they burned the

house mortgage! This moment captured their willingness to sacrifice together in frugality to build a home that was unquestionably their own.

It cannot be left out that Jean had an insatiable sweet tooth. Chocolate truffles, caramels, ice cream, cakes, cookies, and confectionaries of all kinds. On occasion, her parting words to close friends and family were “I love you more than gum and candy!” An apropos expression—especially when you genuinely knew she savored your company the way she savored sweets. For this, and many other reasons, Jean will be missed!

A graveside service will be conducted on Wednesday, March 4 at 11:00 AM at Larkin Sunset Gardens in Sandy, Utah (1950 E. Dimple Dell Road, 106th South).