Jean Whittemore Sharp

February 3, 1923 ~ June 26, 2018

Jean Whittemore Sharp passed peacefully on June 26, 2018 having lived for 95 creative years advocating for the environment and serving the community as well as organizing memorable social events and family reunions.

Born Harriet Jean Whittemore on February 3, 1923 to Harlow Olin Whittemore and Helen Case Whittemore, she is survived by brothers Hal and Bruce Whittemore, daughter Cyndi Sharp and her husband Bill Ligety and grandchildren Charly and Ted Ligety, and Leslyn Williams, as well as great-grandchildren Elliot, Alexia, Oliver and Andersen Williams, and Jax Ligety. Also surviving is Jean's son Randy Sharp and his wife Carol Smith with their daughter Nicola and son Sam Sharp. She was predeceased by sisters Margaret Kelleher, Dorothy Ross, and Ruth Sansome, as well as the love of her life, Ted Sharp.

Jean's creative family life in the university town of Ann Arbor, Michigan gave her the passion for landscape architecture, the performing arts, writing and independent thinking. She graduated from Ann Arbor High School in 1940 as editor of the Omega Yearbook and president of the French Club. In 1944, she received a bachelor of arts in psychology from University of Michigan and was honored for her many activities supporting the War effort and editing the Michiganensian Yearbook.

Shortly after she graduated, she married Theo Frederick Sharp (Ted), an Engineer from the University of Michigan. Ted and Jean first lived in Chicago where he built engines for B-29 bombers while she counseled families of servicemen. After WWII, the couple moved to Detroit where Cyndi was born and Jean worked in the lingerie department at Hudson's flagship store. Working with Chrysler and then Borg Warner, Ted relocated the young family to Ithaca, New York, where Randy was born. Living by Lake Cayuga, Jean and Ted were active with the Ithaca Yacht Club organizing themed dance parties, vacationing by boat to Canada and New York City, and establishing a new racing fleet of Mobjack sailboats. Jean was editor for the Cornell University alumni magazine and leader of the rosy-cheeked Christmas Carolers of North Sunset Drive.

Ted Sharp later joined senior management teams with Dodge Manufacturing and Clark Equipment, moving the family to South Bend, Indiana. Jean's greatest achievement was co-chair of the Michiana Watershed where she successfully campaigned and built the East Race, an Olympic class whitewater kayaking facility that helped to revitalize downtown South Bend. She also organized the St. Joseph River Run that fostered public awareness of water pollution and provided the inspiration to clean the River.

Jean and Ted were absolutely fabulous swing dancers and hosted numerous themed dance parties. The couple was very active with the 100 Dance Club of South Bend and the Chickaming Country Club of Lakeside, Michigan. They traveled extensively including promoting art history tours to Egypt, Greece, and the Chicago Institute of Art.

Jean's greatest passion was exploring, painting and protecting the Lake Michigan sand dunes. After Ted died in 2005, she moved fulltime to the ‚ÄòBeachhead' house on Lake Michigan at Harbert where she hosted ‚Äòholiday camps' for the grandchildren and the great-grandchildren. She was very active with organizations including the Fernwood Botanical Garden, the River Valley Garden Club and The Berrien Cass League of Women Voters where she tackled major environmental and climate change issues in the State of Michigan. We will miss her unbridled enthusiasm for dance, art, the environment, swimming, alpine skiing, and most of all for her loving family.

For online condolences to the family, please visit: www.larkincares.com