

Remembrances



Molly Low

January 3, 1926 - June 30, 2020

Michelle Jane Devor

September 2, 1957 - August 4, 2020

Lola Roach Larson

July 4, 1925 - December 12, 2020

Our first "Remembrances - Celebration of Life" edition included our loving memories of John Atcheson and Vicki Newman who passed away in early January 2020.

go to uufsd.org - News & Events - Yearly Remembrance Magazine

WHEN I DIE

By Merrit Malloy

When I die If you need to weep

Cry for someone walking the street beside you

And when you need me put your arms around others

And give the what you need from me.

You can love me most by letting hands touch hands

And souls touch souls

You can love me most by sharing your joys

Multiplying your good deeds.

You can love me most by letting me live in your eyes

And not in your mind.

And when you say Kaddish for me

Remember what our Torah teaches:

Love doesn't die, People do

So when all that's left of me is Love

Give me away.



Molly Low

January 3, 1926 - June 30, 2020

Molly Low née Mary Louise Thomas died peacefully of old age on June 30, 2020. She was 94. She leaves behind her life partner, her sister, four children and their spouses, four grandchildren, six step children, two great grandchildren, and nieces and nephews.

Molly died at home, surrounded by family and with a brave and calm acceptance that it was time for her next adventure, whatever that may be. This was her character, practical, steadfast. She was an optimist, with an infectious can-do attitude that she endowed upon her children and her friends. She was hugely inspiring.

Molly's life was rich and full. For many years she was a portrait photographer, building a black and white dark room in her garage and producing several art portrait series. Some have been displayed in museums and in exhibits around San Diego, including "Hidden Faces of La Jolla" and "Women in Recovery." She was a long standing member of the Unitarian Universalist church, including at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of San Dieguito where she directed the choir for many years.

Molly studied classical piano at Oberlin Conservatory, at one time heading toward a career as a concert pianist. She raised her family with a profound love of music, and music was an integral part of the household. Each of her children played an instrument, with three going on to professional careers as musicians and teachers and one a physician.

From her husband, Robert (Cris) Crisler:

Molly was an active member in the UU denomination since her early years in New York State, joining UUFSD in 1992. She started and directed the UUFSD Choir and music program and was an active representative to the UU Musicians Network. She was President of the Board during a transition year and served the Fellowship in many ways until her retirement. Many UU members at UUFSD and at First Church will remember her.

From her son Stephen Gagne:

Molly died peacefully in her bed at her home at White Sands on Tuesday. Her partner Cris, her daughter Jeannie, and son Jim were with her. She'd been in hospice, set up at her home, for a bit over a week before she passed, and Jeannie was there, including sleeping by Mom's side at night, for almost the entire hospice period. Jim was also often in attendance for Mom's last week, and helped make sure the Hospice care was handled with all grace. It was about as peaceful a hospice situation as you can imagine. Mom was ready to head out into the unknown, as her medical condition at age 94, had finally become challenging enough so her quality of life just wasn't there any more. She was quite relieved and even cheerful (mostly) to go because of that, as she made clear to all family that were part of this.

Stephen



Folk Festival Fundraiser



Kitchen Duty



Writing Thank You Letters to Members

Dear Cris, Stephen, Jeannie and Jim,

Thank you for sharing notes of Molly's final days on this earth, her mood and the memories that tell a little about her leadership, spirit and commitment to the UUFSD community.

On January 5 or 12, 1997, I attended my first UUFSD service. That day, Molly Low stood up to announce the 8-member choir welcomed more singers. I always knew I'd someday open my heart to a faith community choir, primarily because there would likely be a constructive, welcoming environment (no auditions) and secondly, because I knew from my elementary school church choir days, that my spirituality rested in music and, especially, a faith-based choral experience.

Molly was a pro. A smiling pro. She dedicated her time and resources to learning ever more about choir directing. She raised her standards and ours. She brought music diversity. She welcomed personal diversity. And she laughed.

In 2014, we offered a tribute to Molly and Cris. With my very amateur skills, I put together a brief video, which I'll send to you via hightail.com due to file size. I'll also include a few photos not in the video, because, for some odd reason, I did not include enough good ones of Molly.

The video illustrates the diverse musical programs and voices that enrich UUFSD. There is no doubt the groundwork and hard work was laid by Molly. Beyond the UUFSD choir, Molly set the visionary path for music growth and diversity, including a community folk festival, community concerts, children's choir, paid music staff, improved equipment and trained staff and volunteers. Her financial commitments ensured UUFSD knew the value of, and expected, professional music leadership.

Through choral singing, Molly gave me the 'Spirit of Life.' In this virtual time, I'm sharing my go-to celebration of individuals joined in song: Spirit of Life, All Souls Unitarian Virtual Choir, April 12, 2020: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LikvoliN_bU

My spirit soars hearing how Molly was prepared and surrounded by love (as always) in her final days. She will always be part of my music, my faith and my life.

With love, sympathy and gratitude,

Wenda Alvarez

Sunday Choir in the Amphitheater





Michelle Jane Devor

September 2, 1957 - August 4, 2020

Michelle Jane Devor, a physician and longtime resident of San Diego, CA, passed away peacefully in her Del Mar home on August 4th, 2020 at the age of 62, after a long and hard-fought battle with cancer. Michelle is survived by her daughter, Danielle Devor; her sisters, Andrea Brennan, Christine Ferris, Peggy Ferris and Jean Fast; her nieces Michelle Struthers, Melia Howard, Jessica Brennan and Marissa Brennan; and her nephews Erik Fast and Cody Ferris-Heath.

Michelle grew up in the Brentwood community of Los Angeles and graduated from Pacific Palisades High School in 1974. Michelle graduated from the University of California, Santa Barbara in 1980, completing her bachelor's degree in Biology. Following her dual passions for the humanities and the sciences, she accomplished her medical degree from the University of California, San Diego in 1984. Her colleagues and students will forever recognize her for her brilliant mind and willingness to teach, while her patients will always remember her for kind-heartedness, ability to listen, and her signature curly hair.

Michelle's dreams of becoming a mother became realized on August 12th, 1996, as she welcomed her daughter, Danielle. Michelle was an avid reader and quilter, as well as an experienced traveler; but above all she enjoyed being a mother the most. At home she was most comfortable at the helm of her Bernina sewing machine working on her latest project, reading a new novel, spending time with her dog, or tending her garden.

Michelle was known amongst her friends as an academic, feminist, and social justice activist. She followed her lifelong call to improve the lives of others by joining the efforts of several organizations, such as Doctors without Borders and Border Angels. Michelle was deeply spiritual and was an involved member of the UUFSD church, where her presence will be greatly missed by all who knew her.



A message from her sister Andrea

Dear Friends of Michelle,

It is with a heavy heart that I convey the sad news that my sister Michelle passed away on August 4th. She was incredibly courageous and strong and never fully believed that her cancer would win the battle. She was loved by many and will be deeply missed by her friends, sisters and daughter.

To those of you who comforted, brought meals, shared conversations with, visited or checked in on her or helped her over the last year and a half, I want to thank you. Your friendships meant everything to her and gave her a lot of joy. She was really grateful to have so many kind and loving friends in her life.



Messages from UUFSD friends of Michelle

Roger and Nancy Harmon

For this moment, this reflection: From our time with Michelle in Wed. meditation groups in Solana Beach, and on our Cambodia + Laos trip we shared Michelle's great joy for life! Such exuberance! And such empathy for others. Both these qualities we felt strongly at a 2017 Christmas/holiday party. From the moment we arrived at the party Michelle was so lovely with Nancy's mother, Florence, who was in her early 90s. I have included a photo of them chatting together that day.



Livia Walsh

Michelle was a physician who specialized in geriatric medicine after graduating from UCSD Medical School. For those who knew her professionally it was a great privilege and joy to witness Michelle's remarkable attentiveness and compassion with elders.

Robin Mitchell

I wasn't close to Michelle; I mostly knew her through the library committee. What I noticed there was her energy and passion; she loved books and literature and really cared about improving the library and making it more useful to the Fellowship. And she was by far our best salesperson; when she ran the book closet between services it looked more like a literary festival than a used-book table!

On a more personal note, I visited her a week before she passed and even then she was able to be up and about and doing things she enjoyed; when I got there she had just come in from pruning flowers in her garden. So she was still getting some enjoyment from her life until very near the end.

Betsy Gilpin

What I remember most about Michelle was her truly lovely smile. The lights simply came on when she flashed it. One Sunday while I was up in front singing with the choir, I happened to notice someone whom I took to be a stranger out in the congregation. The "stranger" looked up and caught my eye and then smiled. It was Michelle! That smile was transformative.



Lola Roach Larson

July 4, 1925 - December 21, 2020



Lola Mae Roach Larson was born on the fourth of July 1925 in Los Angeles to parents John (aka Jack) and Hazel Roach. She passed on December 21, 2020 at age 95 from health conditions made worse by COVID-19. Her sister Barbara was also born on the 4th of July two years before Lola. For many years they believed the story that they were so special the entire nation celebrated their birthday.

Lola was born into a pioneering motion picture family with her mother a background actor in silent films and her father a noted cinematographer, location scout, and casting director for his brother's Hal Roach Studios in Culver City. Lola spent many days on the studio lot with the kids of Our Gang and her father's pals movie industry pals including Stan Laurel, Oliver Hardy, Zasu Pitts, and Will Rogers. Lola appeared in several of the Our Gang comedies and other short films.



In addition to living in Los Angeles and Culver City she spent considerable time as a child at her grandparents' avocado farm in Encinitas and on Catalina Island, a favorite haunt of the Hollywood crowd. While living in Encinitas in the 1930's she attended Central Elementary School. Lola liked to reminisce about Encinitas when most roads were dirt and every kid in town could be found on Saturday at the La Paloma theater watching the double feature.

In the summer of 1941 at age 16 Lola was on Catalina Island and met the love of her life Eric Larson who was vacationing with his college buddies. She graduated from Dorsey High School in Los Angeles in 1943 and that summer she and Eric were married immediately following his commission as an officer in the Navy. That marriage lasted 62 loving years together until Eric's passing in 2005.



Following the war, they lived in San Leandro, California and Tacoma, Washington before purchasing and settling down on her grandparents' Encinitas ranch in 1955. Two of Lola's great granddaughters are now the sixth generation to live in the nearly 100-year-old family home.



Lola was active in the P.T.A., scouts, YMCA, 4-H, Galloping Gourmets, and the San Dieguito Heritage Museum. As a Red Cross Water Safety Instructor she taught several hundred children and adults from North County how to swim. Much of her time was spent supporting and attending her children's sports, social, and academic activities. She worked in the Home Arts Department at the San Diego County Fair for many years and was a frequent ribbon-winner in various cooking and decorating categories at the fair. An athlete all her life, as an adult she played recreational softball and competitive badminton. Lola enjoyed a wide circle of friends in the Encinitas area, many dating back to her childhood. Water skiing and camping were favorite family pastimes with many days spent at Lake Tahoe (where the family had a second home), the Colorado River, and Estero Bay.



In retirement Lola and Eric traveled extensively visiting more than 50 countries and traveling by motorhome to all 49 continental U.S. states. Avid boaters, for nearly 20 years they spent the winter months in Cabo San Lucas chasing marlin and dorado. Just as they had done with their children, a favorite retirement activity was enjoying their grandchildren's activities. Later in life Lola found a spiritual home at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of San Dieguito and had the companionship of Bobby Gooding and care by friend Mary Bressi. Her last residence was Las Villas de Carlsbad where she received compassionate care for several years.

Lola was predeceased by her parents, husband Eric, daughter Christine, sister Barbara, and daughter-in-law Sandy. Lola is survived by her sons Eric (Jennifer), Jon, Doran (Jennifer), grandchildren Bobbi-Lynn, Scott (Michele), Nate (Susan), Ryan (Alexis), Zac (Jennifer), Julia, and Shane and great grandchildren Cassie, Eric, Rilo, Russell, Fern, and Roland.

FYI, the July 2012 Quarterly Magazine "Dialogue" has an interview that MB Taylor conducted called "Lola Larson Up Close." It is wonderful!!! Go to UUFSD.org - News & Events - Quarterly Magazine - July 2012 - Pages 11-13. Enjoy a celebration of Lola's life.

Remembrances from friends at UUFSD



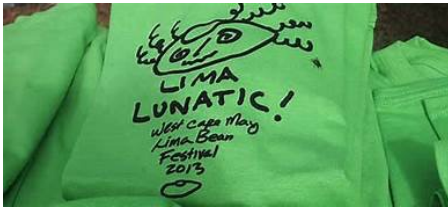
Irv Himmelblau & Livia Walsh

Livia and I attended a UUFSD Family Camp at Debenerville Pines in 2010. Lola had entertained everyone the evening before with her rendition of Shirley Temple's "On the Good Ship Lollipop." Lola and her just married Bobby Gooding and were spending their honeymoon at the camp. Bobby was driving an old pick up truck at the time and as they were leaving we flagged them down to offer congratulations. When Lola opened the window, a burst of cigarette smoke bellowed out like a chimney. As we stood there choking on the smoke, Liv and I hardly had enough breath to cough our way through a congratulations.

Remembrances from friends at UUFSD

Alisa Guralnick

Lola Larson was a great 'fixture' at UUFSD. Any time the choir was singing, she was right in front. She made a point to tell me a 'blonde joke' nearly every time we spoke. I remember her sharing her enthusiasm for the San Dieguito Heritage Museum's Lima Bean Festival (which I didn't even know about, and which led me to check out our town's interesting history!). Lola had a deep, raspy voice, an irrepressible smile and a lot of joy to share. I will never forget her.



Linda Giannelli Pratt (Worship Associate) "Hello, my name is Lola Larson."

And then she would be off and running to regale us with a story during the Joys and Sorrows part of our service. It would typically end up in a joke, followed by applause from the audience, and her face would light up. I often took time to talk with her after services and discovered a wise, brave and compassionate woman who had seen and done so much during her life. She deeply loved her first husband, and told me stories about their adventures together. She was devoted to her children, and since I had met Erik through my work, I heard a lot about him. Lola was someone I would have loved to spend an evening with to learn more about her life. I hope her family treasures all the times spent with her and recall her wisdom and zest for life. She personifies my favorite Emile Zola quote, "If you ask me what I came into this life to do, I will tell you: I came to live out loud." Thank you, Lola.

Steve Rosen Always open with kind words and a joke.

Heidi Welsh Lovely lady full of spunk and wit. What a full life! RIP Lola.

Tiffany Fox I would always get so excited when she would share at "Joys and Sorrows" because it was bound to be a warm-hearted and funny story with a great punchline. She had charm and pizzazz. I loved how she would decorate her cane and often wear matching jewelry. She also raised a son (Eric) who is instrumental in educating many about water and agricultural issues. What a dame!

Diane Masser Frye Oh, we will miss her so much! She was always full of joy and mischief.

Cherl Close It was noticeable that Lola was not at our services. I think I mentioned it once or twice, and now I understand why I'd been missing her smile, her silly jokes, her honest conversation. As part of the choir, I'd had a good vantage point to see her beaming face regularly, and I'd enjoyed quick chats in the patio. Lola's spirit shined brightly, so bright, I could feel her warmth. She will be remembered and treasured.



Kathy Fallor Here is a picture of Lola on a home build. She was around 80 at the time. The story was that her sons refused her to drive the motorhome or climb up on the roof. When we started shingling, that is the first thing she wanted to do and she made sure that we took her picture! She was so adventuresome, that she even drove her car down. Julie can attest to this because she was the passenger. A great person to have on a build.