



Electa Ethel Nichols Lang

April 21, 1927 - September 18, 2024

Lang, Electa Ethel Nichols Jenne was born on April 21, 1927, and died on September 18, 2024 after suffering a stroke on September 13, 2024. She is survived by her daughters Candace Lang (Bob Treumann), Deborah Mulligan (Jeff), and Terri Lang (Brad Turner); her foster son, Bruce Feldman; Marilyn Feldman; son-in-law Larry Carrington; ten grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren. She was predeceased by her husband Thomas Raymond Lang and by two of her daughters, Carol Sweeten and Diane Carrington.

Electa grew up in Gouverneur, New York, with two older brothers, Hiram and Everett, and her younger sister Jean. Electa looked up to her older brothers and was close to her sister. The Jennes did not have much money, but Electa's Aunt Alice and Uncle Earl Brown lived close by and they would take the Jennes for a ride in a car on Sundays. It was on the Brown's farm that Electa learned to tap maple trees for their sap, and do maple sugaring. Electa loved to take the maple sap and sip it cold, but she also learned to boil it and pour it on fresh snow. It was the best sweet treat, and Electa would make this with the first fallen snow, but only with real maple syrup.

When Electa shared her memories of her high school, she spoke about World War II, as it began when she was a freshman. She remembered listening to President Roosevelt talking on the radio to the American people after Pearl Harbor was bombed. It was a very scary time for Electa, her family, and the world. Everyone supported the war, and all the boys in high school couldn't wait to be old enough to join the army. As a junior Electa ran for class

secretary with a slogan "Elect Electa." (She won.) And then there was the time she was asked to teach the French class for a few days as the teacher was very sick and they could not find a substitute. Electa graduated Valedictorian of her class, but her friends remembered her more for her tendency to do things like balancing books on her head and whistling while walking the halls of Gouverneur High. One memory stood out for Electa the summer after graduating from high school. She and her boyfriend Carlton went out to Sylvia Lake, which had a cliff. Carlton dared Electa to jump from the cliff, which was 40-to-50 feet high. He said "you go first" and she did. "I went down for what seemed an eternity, and was sure my lungs were going to burst before I came up. When I surfaced I could see that Carlton had not jumped, he chickened out." After this incident, they drifted apart.

Electa went to Cornell University in upstate New York where she met her future husband Tom in a German class. His first words to her were, "Haben Sie einen Füllfederhalter?" ("Do you have a fountain pen?") Electa fell in love with him in spite of this, and they were married on January 1, 1949, and were married for 65 years. They started their married life in Buffalo, New York. There was a desperate shortage of teachers, so Electa took education courses at Buffalo University to become certified to teach grade-school children. She taught elementary children for several years, and then she and Tom moved to Elmhurst, Illinois. Electa had five girls in ten years - she became a stay-at-home mom, but she was very busy attending Girls Scouts, PTA, and church activities. Her good friend and sister-in-law, Pat, had children at the same time, so the two would talk daily about the challenges of motherhood and exchange ideas for dinner. When Carol, her eldest daughter, was in high school, Electa took education courses at Elmhurst College to become a high school teacher. Tom and Electa moved to Pelham, New York for a couple of years, but moved back to the Midwest in 1966. Electa said it was hard to raise children in New York, so she was relieved when they moved back to the Midwest and settled in Clarendon Hills, Illinois. Electa taught at Hinsdale South High School for 16 years, teaching Social Studies and

Economics. She loved teaching, and watching her students learn and grow. Her students were very fond of "Mrs. Lang," and many visited her after they had graduated to let her know how important she had been to them. It was during Electa's teaching years that Tom and Electa fostered four children. During the summers the family camped, taking their station wagon and loading it with tents and camping gear. The girls complained about who got to sit where, because seven in a station wagon was tight. Electa was the one who calmed the kids, and made things right. Later they bought a Dodge motorhome, and that was a big upgrade. They took their children and other children on camping trips in the "Big Blue Bus."

Electa and Tom took advantage of their retirement years and joined the Sierra Club. They backpacked from the Sierra Mountains to the Wind River Range. Electa was very proud of herself when she climbed Half Dome in Yosemite with a forty pound pack; she was only 5 feet 2 inches tall! They also discovered the Elder Hostel program and enjoyed traveling to many places, including Venice, Italy, Israel, and Scandinavia. They studied Spanish together and took many trips to Mexico and South America. Electa saw first-hand how others lived and returned from these trips grateful for what she had.

Throughout Electa's life, the church was her foundation. She volunteered in many ways through the church for social issues she cared about passionately. She helped with PADS, a program for the homeless; tutored disadvantaged children in Chicago's inner city; and volunteered with a hospice program. Electa would say she didn't do anything grand in her life, because that was the kind of person she was, but she was there for her family, her extended family, for people who were under served, and for those who could not advocate for themselves. Her family will remember her as a loving, kind, thoughtful, generous mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother who loved to sing and whistle.

Donations in Electa's memory can be made to Brighton Hospice Minnesota (at 4500 Park Glen Rd #475, St Louis Park, MN 55416), Alliance Housing Inc. (at

2309 Nicollet Ave, Minneapolis, MN 55404), or Habitat for Humanity.