



## Joyce Arlene Bankson

July 18, 1929 - December 3, 2025

Joyce Arlene Bankson, 1929-2025

Joyce Arlene Bankson died December 3 in hospice care at Covenant Living of Golden Valley, Minn. She lived all but three weeks of her later years at home with support from her family, enjoying simple pleasures and daily routines. The cause given on her death certificate was "Inability to Thrive" any longer at her age. She was 96.

Joyce was born July 18, 1929, in Duluth, Minn., the daughter of Arnold Carlson and the former Hilda Moberg. Her roots were 100-percent Swedish. She grew up in West Duluth and attended its architecturally distinctive Denfeld High School. After graduating, she began studies in music at the Duluth campus of the University of Minnesota. But her intentions were waylaid in the sudden death of her mother, a nurse, on December 2, 1947, nearly the same day as Joyce's passing. She then became the surrogate mother of her two younger siblings, Donna and Jim.

When her father remarried, she and Donna left Duluth for Minneapolis while Jim, at the time, was serving in the military. Joyce got a job with a social service agency serving children and families. She met Iowa native Les Bankson through a friend from Duluth who knew Joyce. They were married in April of 1957 at her home church in Duluth, Salem Covenant.

Joyce and Les initially lived in the apartment on the south side of Minneapolis that Joyce had shared with Donna. In 1959 they bought the first of six homes, a two-bedroom bungalow with a finished attic in Edina. Their daughter Deborah Joy was born in January of 1961 followed by daughter Karen Joy in April of 1964. Two of their other homes were again in Edina and the other three in Alexandria and McLean, Va., and Rockville, Md. Their moving came with new jobs for Les and the hope of Joyce finding increased contentment. Producing, providing, caring for and loving two daughters was the highlight of her life.

In 1978 when in Edina, Joyce took a secretarial position with Honeywell. She continued to work for the company with the relocation to Rockville and did so until her retirement in May of 1993.

Joyce's talents as a vocalist, pianist, and organist were applied in the programs first of her home church in Duluth and then at those of which she and the family were a part-First Covenant Church in Minneapolis; the Covenant Church in Edina; Fourth Presbyterian in Bethesda, Md.; and Wooddale in Eden Prairie, Minn. Piano playing for weddings and at Christmas family gatherings were cherished experiences.

Domestic travel for Joyce included explorations throughout much of the United States. Highlights included numerous camping trips during early marriage with Les, winter breaks in Vero Beach, Fla., Christmases in New York City, historical excursions in Williamsburg, Va., and garden admiring along the East Coast and in the South. A most meaningful experience was when Karen accompanied her parents to Vero Beach for the last time in 2020 when Joyce was 91, and they went to favorite spots from past visits.

Additionally, Joyce had numerous overseas travel adventures. These included

travels in Sweden, Norway, Finland, Russia, Great Britain, Germany, Hungary, and Prague. One outstanding experience was when Joyce flew solo in 1994 to Budapest, Hungary to visit Karen, who was then teaching there, and together they also visited Prague and cities in Germany.

Joyce's survivors include Les, Deborah and her husband Mark Person, Karen and her husband Bill Mirsch, and her brothers-in-law Ben Bankson and Dixon Jones. She was preceded in death by her sister Donna in 2002 and brother Jim in 2022.

A private 'Celebration of Life' occurred on 12-21-2025 at the Dewey Hill Party Room, a location where Les and Joyce hosted numerous family celebrations throughout the past 25 years.