



## Lola Ellen Hagen

July 5, 1928 - August 31, 2023

Lola E. Hagen

Lola Ellen Hagen, 95, died peacefully in her sleep, at home in Vadnais Heights, MN on August 31, 2023. She received loving care from family members during her final weeks and spent her final hours in the company of her children.

Lola was the youngest of three daughters, born to Benjamin and Lora (Cooper) McQuain, in Fort Collins, Colorado on July 5, 1928. Having older sisters who took piano lessons sparked a keen interest in Lola to follow suit. Her piano teacher made Lola wait to start lessons until she was 8 years old because she was so petite that her teacher feared her inability to stretch her tiny hand a full octave might discourage her. However once Lola got started, she never looked back. She loved to play. Lola was the piano accompanist at various school functions through her years at Waverly (Colorado) High School, where she graduated in 1945 as the valedictorian of her class of six. Lola went on to attend Colorado A&M (now Colorado State University), and then worked for the CSU Extension Service for four years. Moving to Denver, she was employed by the Colorado office of the Production and Marketing Administration (predecessor of the USDA). She met Bob, her future husband of 70 years, while living in the same boarding house in Denver and they spent many evenings sitting side-by-side on that boarding house's piano bench, playing duets. They married in a double marriage ceremony on New Year's Eve 1950, a mere six weeks after they had met and just prior to Bob shipping

out to serve overseas in the U.S. Army. The couple later moved to Northwood, North Dakota to help run Hagen's Grocery and start a family. As involved members of the community, Lola taught piano lessons, and she and Bob both taught Sunday school and shared their musical talent with congregations in several of the towns they called home over the years.

Until her retirement in 1988, Lola worked outside the home most of her adult life, all the while devoting herself to faith and family. While in her 40s and raising teenagers, Lola returned to school and in 1974 completed her B.A. degree at what was then known as Moorhead State College. Setting goals, attaining them, and helping others along the way drove Lola and those qualities served her well during her 18-year career as a Taxpayer Service Representative with the Fargo, ND office of the IRS - a role that brought her in contact with everyone from those of modest means to wealthy professionals. All were given the help they needed and were treated kindly and respectfully - one of many lessons she imparted to her children by example, not lectures. In addition to her musical talent, Lola was a skilled seamstress. Whether it was apparel, doll clothes, costumes, window treatments, or upholstery, no challenge was beyond her reach. She passed along these skills to daughter Lori, providing patient and calm encouragement, but at the same time imparting the importance of maintaining high standards of workmanship. Lola was unfailingly kind and generous with friends and family.

Those who didn't know this slight woman with the winsome smile might have expected she'd be meek. They'd have been mistaken. Lola possessed a steely resolve and a keen, dry wit. When someone we love is stubborn, we say they're "strong-willed." Well, Lola was strong-willed. She knew how she wanted things done and she wasn't afraid to say so. Even as her strength waned in her final weeks, Lola's spirit shone through as she surprised and delighted caregivers and loved ones with unexpected jokes and her remarkable ability to physically rally, time after time, even when it seemed she had been hanging to life by a thread.

Nothing brought Lola more joy than her family. She and Bob spent their 70

years of marriage quite literally making beautiful music together; he on the electric organ and she on the piano. They loved DIY remodeling and redecorating projects. Once they got a place fixed up just the way they liked it, they'd look for a new place and start over again. Lola's eagerness to put others first is probably what best defined her and seeing the happiness of her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren was, for her, a reward worth more than any personal sacrifice she may have made along the way. Even in her 90s, Lola would get down and crawl around on the floor to play with her great-grandchildren and nothing could match the joy that brought - to everyone.

Preceded in death by husband, Robert; her parents; sisters, Doris (Glenn) Hayes, and Elline (Laurence) McCain; as well as several nieces and nephews. Lola is survived by her daughter Lori (Mark) Fleck of New Salem, ND, son Rodger (Regina) Hagen of Shoreview, MN; six grandchildren, Ryan Fleck (fiancée Ruth), Katie (Joe) Trottier, Max Jytyla, Adrianna Jytyla, Raija Jytyla, and Robby Hagen; and 3 great-grandchildren, Audrey Fleck, Brooks Fleck, and Mathias Trottier.

A Celebration of Life, for close friends and family, will be held at 11:00AM Wednesday, September 20th (visitation 10-11AM) at Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church 3920 N. Victoria Street, Shoreview, MN. Private interment service will take place on September 21, 2023, at the Fort Snelling National Cemetery, in Minneapolis, MN. Anyone wishing to make a memorial gift may do so by making a donation to their charity of choice.

Please visit the link listed here for Lola's Celebration of Life Service <https://www.facebook.com/shepherdshoreviewmn/videos>

You may also view Lola's service at <https://www.youtube.com/@shepherdofthehillschurchsh9623/streams>

# Tribute Wall

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“ *I enjoyed our phone conversations on her birthday and with her and Bob during the Christmas holiday every year while Bob was living and then with her alone. They were my last link to Northwood.  
May her memory be a blessing.*



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**Deane Bergsrud** - September 20, 2023 at 12:00 AM