



Lorraine Ann Mesken

March 17, 1928 - May 2, 2023

Mesken, Lorraine Palmer Rybak who helped bring the first classes of girls to Breck School, and who later counseled thousands of high school students on their college choices, died this week. She was 95 years old. Born in San Francisco in 1928, she moved with her family to a small farm in nearby San Bruno as the Depression took hold. World War II brought military from around the country to her town and shortly after graduating from high school, she met a soldier from the Minnesota National Guard. After the war, they married and moved to Minnesota, but the marriage ended in divorce. They had one son, Joseph. Several years later, while she was living in downtown Minneapolis' Continental Hotel, she met fellow resident Ray Rybak, who was managing the Walgreens at 9th and Nicollet. They married and went on to have three children: Michael, R. T. and Georgeann. In 1960 she and Ray opened Rybak Drug at 26th and Fourth Avenue in south Minneapolis. A few years later it was torn down to make way for 35W. Shortly after opening a new store at Chicago and Franklin Avenue, Ray had a stroke and later died, leaving Lorraine to run the store, which had a series of robberies. After being held up at gunpoint two nights in a row, she closed the store and got a job running the bookstore at Breck School. When the decision was made to turn the all-boys school co-educational, she was named the first Dean of Girls and helped the first nine girls navigate a groundbreaking path from 9th grade to graduation. Her lifelong dream was to get a college degree and working in a school gave her a chance to get college credits in summer. She eventually got a B.A. and a

Master's in Education from the University of Minnesota. For more than 20 years she was Breck's College Counselor, helping thousands of students get into college. She became nationally known for this work, both at Breck and later Mounds Park Academy, and served on several national boards and was Past President of the National Association of College Counselors. After Mesken retired she and her third husband Chuck Mesken - who she described as "the love of my life" - split their time between going to every Vikings game (including every losing Super Bowl) and traveling. Based on his deep knowledge of world geography, and recorded in her colorfully detailed journals, they visited both well-known tourist destinations and more exotic locations including Syria, Tanzania, extensive tours of China three times, and circumnavigated South America. A few days after returning from Antarctica, where they had finally set foot on every continent, he suddenly died. She was heartbroken, but not broken, and the following year went to the final big destination they had envisioned: India. Mesken stayed active in the following years, including as a full-time volunteer in her son R.T.'s campaigns for Mayor of Minneapolis. At 80, she parasailed with her granddaughters; at 84 she stage dived at the DFL Victory Party to celebrate Barack Obama's reelection; and at 90, she zip-lined over the Mississippi as part of celebrations for one more Super Bowl that her beloved Vikings wouldn't win. She was proud of her Irish/Scottish/English heritage (especially being born on St. Patrick's Day) and was very successful in tracing her family's colorful history. On both sides of her family, she had relatives who crossed The Oregon Trail by covered wagon, one of whom went on to ride with Kit Carson as a scout, and a great grandfather who was a gold miner in Skagway, Alaska. She is survived by her brother John Palmer (Carolyn Palmer), children Michael Rybak (Deborah Caulfield Rybak), R. T. Rybak (Megan O'Hara), Georgeann Rybak, and Joe Donner; her grandchildren Laura Frazzetta (Billy Frazzetta), Charlie Rybak (Ashley Lowes), Grace Rybak (Luis Filipe Grochocki) and Tori Vogel (Kareem Mansur). A celebration of her life is planned for June 24 at St. John's Episcopal Church, 4201 Sheridan Ave. S, Minneapolis. Washburn-

McReavy.com Edina Chapel 952-920-3996

Cemetery Details

Lakewood Cemetery (Minneapolis)

3600 Hennepin Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55408

Tribute Wall

LG

“ So sorry to hear of Lorraine's passing. We moved two houses down from her in 1992 and she was such a warm and welcoming woman. We still live in that house and we miss her calm and positive presence. We are very sorry for your loss. - Lynn and John Green

Lynn Green - June 21, 2023 at 04:09 PM

MM

“ I had the joy of meeting Lori through a family friend. On our first meeting as someone who was going to help her take care of her home, we connected. Many memories followed with a LOT of great talks every time I saw her. She was one in a million. I will miss her dearly, but will always have the memories. Rest in peace friend. I will think of you when I go to Wagners Nursery to pick out Christmas plants. I still think they all looked the same to me! But will laugh, and remember you thought otherwise. And will never forget the hamburgers I got at Perkins. We ate them on your couch. With smiles. Wiping the grease from our faces. Love to your family, and all your friends. Love, Marge.

marge morris - May 08, 2023 at 07:32 PM



“ Pretty Please was purchased for the family of Lorraine Ann Mesken.



May 08, 2023 at 02:48 PM