



## Marilyn E. (Merritt) Cuneo

July 13, 2016

Cuneo, Marilyn E. (Merritt) age 91, passed away peacefully at her home in Mendota Heights on July 13, 2016. Marilyn was preceded in death by her husband of 45 years, Santiago. She is survived by her children and their partners: Chris (Linda Thompson) Larry (Melissa Constantine), Deborah (Mike Sullivan), and Marisa Cuneo-Linsly (Jerry Linsly), by her grandchildren and their partners: Tony Cuneo (Erin), Monica Cuneo (Mikael Brust), Gina Collins (Aaron), Jackson Cuneo (Andrea), and Mara Cuneo Sullivan (Paul Levi); by her great-grandchildren: Esmae and Elsa Cuneo and Elliot Collins; and by countless friends on whose lives she has had a positive impact. Marilyn was a direct descendant of the Merritt family that discovered the Mesabi Iron Range. The Merritt thrill of exploration helped shape her extraordinary life. Marilyn was a lifelong educator. Early in her adult life, Marilyn helped advance her husband's passion to build stronger bonds among the Americas. She was active in many local Pan-American organizations, often helping to organize community events including the forerunner to the later Festival of Nations. Marilyn was also active in creating after-school programs in her children's schools. As her children grew up, Marilyn returned to the University of Minnesota to continue post-graduate studies. In addition to graduate degrees, Marilyn's reconnection with academia led to teaching positions at the University, to development of Latin American literature and other undergraduate courses, and to serve for several years as Director of Undergraduate Studies in the Spanish Department. Even after retirement,

Marilyn was relentless in her pursuit of, and sharing of knowledge. Marilyn's life was also characterized by her activism on behalf of women's issues, human rights issues, and pursuit of peace. She and her daughters attended the controversial United Nations 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing, China in 1995. Consistent with her adventurous spirit, Marilyn traveled from Helsinki to Beijing on a Peace Train sponsored by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). That unique, memorable experience, chronicled in books and documentaries, led to Marilyn becoming an active member of the Twin City Chapter of WILPF. In that capacity, Marilyn was a founder of the WILPF Arts Committee, to which she contributed her creativity, vision and energy for many years. The Committee uses the arts as a tool to educate and raise consciousness. Much of its work is now curated in the Minnesota Activism Collection at the College of St. Catherine's. To complement her more cerebral pursuits, Marilyn was an athlete. She was raised in a family that eschewed the notion that girls could only play certain sports. As Marilyn entered the second phase of her life, she transferred her competitive vigor from beating her children at tennis to beating full-grown adults. Marilyn treasured the friendships she formed through the Senior Tennis Players Club of Minnesota. She qualified for, and with her fellow senior athletes traveled the country as a tennis and racquetball participant in biennial Senior Olympics. That resulted in numerous medals. To prove her athletic diversity, Marilyn trained for, and won her age bracket in the 1991 Aquatennial Triathlon. Marilyn was an outstanding citizen of the world, mentor and mother. She'll be sorely missed. Visitation: Monday, July 18th from 5-8 PM at Washburn-McReavy Chapel, 2301 Dupont Ave S, Minneapolis, MN 55405 (612-377-2203). Private Interment. Celebration of Life Service: Saturday, August 6th at 11:30 AM at Lakewood Chapel, with celebration to continue at a party venue immediately after the service. Memorials should be directed to Red Cloud Indian School, 100 Mission Drive, Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, South Dakota 57770.



# Tribute Wall

WF

“*Mrs. Cuneo was one of my favorite Spanish instructors when I was an undergraduate student at the University of Minnesota. She was so personable. She clearly had a passion for teaching and she truly cared about her students. She set the bar high for us and we reached to do our best. Because of her, I changed my major from elementary education to Spanish education. I taught Spanish in Minnesota for 43 years. I will always remember her fondly and with the deepest respect.*

*Wendy Fox*

---

**Wendy Fox** - July 17, 2016 at 02:31 PM