



Marlene Joan Banttari

April 14, 1937 - October 15, 2024

Marlene Joan Banttari (Salmela), 87, of Roseville, passed away on October 15, 2024. Marlene was born in Wadena, MN on April 14, 1937 to Laurie and Lempie Salmela.

Growing-up on a farm near Sebeka, Marlene began an active career in 4-H in 1947 at the age of nine. Her committed involvement earned her a trip to the National 4-H Congress in 1956. She graduated as Salutatorian from Sebeka High School in 1955. She earned a bachelor's degree in Home Economics from the University of Minnesota. Marlene belonged to Beta Chapter of Clovia and remained committed as an Alumnae, working with her sorority sisters to support the Housing and Scholarship Funds.

After graduating from the university, Marlene taught Home Economics at Cambridge and then Brooklyn Center High Schools before becoming the Education Manager for Consumer Service Kitchens at the Pillsbury Company. She served as the chairman of the Twin Cities Home Economists in Business (HEIB) and ultimately became a free-lance home economist and worked on recipe testing.

In June 1965 she married Ernest Eino "Ernie" Banttari. They lived in St. Paul before moving into the house her brother designed for them in

Roseville where she lived for over fifty years. They also cherished time spent together and hosting guests at their cabin on Eagles Nest Lake, near Ely.

Marlene was a Board Member Emeritus of the Salolampi Foundation, where her commitment and service to the Finnish Language Village went above and beyond for over three decades as a board member, Sanomat Editor, Sanomat Chief Editor, Scholarship Chair, and History Chair.

Marlene participated in several Finnish American organizations including the Twin Cities Finnish American Cultural Association (FACA), Finlandia Foundation Twin Cities, Finnish Kitchen to the Festival of Nations, and the annual Finnish Joulu Celebration. Through FACA, she partnered with the American Swedish Institute to decorate the Finnish room for the annual holiday displays.

Marlene's favorite job was that of Baking Judge at the Minnesota State Fair where she judged baked goods in the Creative Activities Building every State Fair for 35 years.

Marlene was so proud of her family and Finnish heritage. She traveled to Finland many times in her life and was instrumental in maintaining familial relationships with Salmela and Matti relatives in Finland and welcoming them on visits to Minnesota.

Marlene's kind, inquisitive, and hard-working spirit impacted all who knew her.

Marlene is preceded in death by her husband Ernest "Ernie" and her parents Laurie Fredrick Salmela and Lempie Christine (Mattie) Salmela. She is

survived by her three brothers Lyle (Elaine) Salmela of Arden Hills, David (Gladys) Salmela of Duluth, and Theron "Terry" Salmela of Mora, and many nieces and nephews.

The family wishes to thank James and Lois Hendrickson and Barbara Besonen for their help in caring for Marlene in her final years and to staff at Gladys Place in Plymouth for their kindness and care. Marlene has donated her body to the University of Minnesota Bequest Program.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, November 16 at 2:00PM preceded by a visitation beginning at 1:00PM at Washburn-McReavy, Shoreview Chapel, 515 Highway 96 West, Shoreview. A reception will follow the service.

Memorials are preferred to
Salolampi Foundation
P.O. Box 14480
Minneapolis, MN 55414-0480
to donate online:
www.salolampi.org

Tribute Wall

RR

“ *Marlene and Maria in Twin Cities.*



Ritva Reinikka - November 16, 2024 at 12:30 PM

KS

“ *We are really sorry for your loss. We remember Marlene as a lovely and warm relative. She visited many times in Finland. She visited us in the old Salmela house in Simo alone in the early 1960s and with her husband Ernest in the mid-1960s. They visited our cottage on the beach in the late 1990s, and Marleena alone in the early 2000s. We have many warm memories of these visits. And we had a great honor to meet again in America a couple of years ago. Her hospitality was incredible. May Marlene rest in peace. Our thoughts are with you. Regards Salmela family from Finland*

Kaisa Salmela - November 16, 2024 at 10:48 AM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Marlene Joan Banttari.*

November 14, 2024 at 11:56 AM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Marlene Joan Banttari.*



November 14, 2024 at 11:56 AM



“ *Milli, Barry, Eli Bissonett and Emma and purchased the Dreams From the Heart Bouquet for the family of Marlene Joan Banttari.*



Milli, Barry, Eli Bissonett and Emma and - November 13, 2024 at 07:10 PM

RR

“ *Marlene was such a special lady. She was a true friend of Finland, all Finns and especially her Finnish relatives. We met for the first time in 1984 when, as students in Canada, my late husband Hannu (Marlene's Finnish relative) and I visited Marlene and Earnie in the Twin Cities at the start of our tour of Minnesota relatives, including Sebeka, Wadena, New York Mills. Many other visits followed over the next 40 years.*

Marlene came to see us in Helsinki when Hannu was seriously ill in the late 1980s. In Washington DC, she found time to visit us when she was fundraising for Salolampi with the Finnish Embassy. And the bus tour of tens of Matti cousins across Finland in 2005 stopped at our house, too, in Taipalsaari, South Karelia, for a local meal of lake fish, new potatoes and strawberries. Marlene was the American organizer of the trip together with Jukka Matinpuro on the Finnish side.

When my daughter Maria was a student in Macalester College in St Paul in the early-2010s, Marlene took her under her wing. She took Maria to the Finnish Christmas celebrations and to many other events. Marlene was Maria's special guest when we celebrated her graduation in 2014.

Marlene will be dearly missed. Her service to the community is an inspiration and has a lasting impact.

Ritva Reinikka - November 10, 2024 at 01:42 PM

DL

“ *The Mattie family trip to Finland with Marlene and 30 plus cousins was memorable . Her Finnish was helpful in addressing our Finnish cousins.*

Her involvement in Salalampi displays her interest in keeping the Finnish language and customs alive.

Marlene was a truly a proper lady. I do still remember her wedding flowers and her lovely dress.

Diane Ruona Langlee

Diane Langlee - November 05, 2024 at 09:26 PM

CJ

“ *Our friendship has spanned 60 years. Marlene was working at Pillsbury the day I walked in to my first job in Dec. 1966. We worked together on lots of professional activities especially Home Economists in Business. She was a "true gem" and a real pleasure to know. My deepest sympathies.*

Carol Jackson - November 05, 2024 at 04:57 PM

KL

“ *Many good memories of Marlene - including the three years we worked together on the Finnish Christmas room at the American Swedish Institute. She was an inspiration.*

Kathleen Ulku Laurila - November 04, 2024 at 10:48 PM