



## Mary Dana Korman

January 29, 1938 - January 24, 2025

Mary Dana Korman, beloved mother, grandmother, friend, and extraordinary woman, passed away peacefully on January 24th, 2025 in the presence of family.

Born in New York City on January 29, 1938, Mary was named after her father's mother, "Ida Mary," his sister Mary, and her mother's best friend Mary. Her childhood was filled with moves-from Georgia to Michigan and later to Yucaipa, California. By ninth grade, her family settled in Santa Monica, California. The eldest of four daughters, Mary spent her early years riding horses, biking, and exploring the outdoors.

After graduating from Santa Monica High School, Mary earned a degree in psychology from Mills College. She married and started her family with the births of her sons, Erik in 1965 and Mark in 1968. A move to Minnesota brought opportunities for skiing, skating, sailing, canoeing, and alongside her husband Ron, building the cherished Korman family cabin-a gathering place for future generations.

Mary's professional journey was extensive and impactful. She earned a Master's degree in Social Work from the University of Minnesota and worked as a family therapist at an outpatient mental health clinic. She also volunteered in schools and served on the board of a local YWCA. Later, Mary

transitioned into family business consulting, where she "guided privately held companies through the interpersonal and business challenges of transitioning ownership and leadership from one generation to another"-a role she found immensely rewarding. Even in retirement, Mary remained passionate about her work, supervising social work graduate students, developing curriculum, and teaching life skills classes to single mothers.

One of Mary's greatest joys in life was being "Naná," a nickname affectionately given by her first granddaughter, Casey. In her own words: "Grandchildren have brought a wonderful opportunity to laugh and play, to see the world through new eyes, and to marvel at the unfolding of these young lives. To watch them blossom warms me through and through." Mary delighted in creating meaningful experiences with her grandchildren. She took them to bookstores, museums, plays, cultural events, sports games, fairs, and parades - always seeking opportunities to nurture their curiosity and enrich their lives. Her son Erik emphasized that "Mom was always focused on the little people-and weren't they lucky!" Summers at the family cabin felt like camp under her care; she always introduced a new craft, book, or game for the children to enjoy. Mary even took her granddaughters to Paris and London alongside her sister Ruth, creating unforgettable memories. She was also a connoisseur at celebrations, especially birthdays and holidays. On every occasion worth gathering, she went the extra mile to make sure people felt special. Her granddaughter Marcela captured it perfectly: "Naná always did things to make the world feel magical."

Along with her devotion to the little ones in her life, Mary found joy in the simple pleasures and everyday excitements. She was never one to remain idle or stagnant. In her own words: "I think of life now as a smorgasbord with a variety of dishes on the table from which to choose." On this menu of options, she enjoyed spending time with family & friends, gardening (her own and at the local Peace Garden), biking, knitting, sewing, walking, reading, traveling,

skiing, games such as Scrabble, cribbage, and dominoes, volunteering, theater, and more. She participated in cooking clubs, book clubs, and activities that fostered community around shared interests. She was also a devoted Minnesota Twins and Minnesota Vikings fan. She & her son Mark spent many afternoons together cheering on their teams.

A night owl, Mary often curled up in her study with a good book, the window open to hear the sounds of thunderstorms. Known for her independence, organization, and frugality, Mary candidly described herself as "making multitasking an art form". She found great satisfaction in checking tasks off her to-do lists, was always on time, planning ahead, and encouraged others to do the same. Yet, she remained adventurous, savoring new dishes at restaurants and immersing herself fully in new environments while traveling, avoiding the typical tourist approach.

Deeply dedicated to helping others, Mary held a humble eagerness for understanding different lives and perspectives. A lifelong learner, she absorbed lessons on humanity and culture through her professional endeavors, travels, avid reading, and collection of life experiences. She regularly read newspapers, saving clippings she found interesting or relevant to share with loved ones. A proud liberal and feminist, Mary was always engaged in civic life. She followed politics closely and generously supported candidates who aligned with her beliefs and values. Despite her introverted nature, she was remarkably personable-never hesitating to greet or wave at strangers during walks around the Lake of the Isles. Her "Minnesota Niceness" was as genuine as it gets.

Mary was a thoughtful and reflective writer. Some excerpts that speak to her personality and complexity:

"My bucket list is simple: to nourish my soul by enjoying the company of the people I love, by seeking stimulating, active and interesting activities, by making space for contemplation and reflection, by contributing to the lives of others and by absorbing the majesty of the mountains and the sea. I have written no books, won no competitions, gained no celebrity status, climbed no mountains, discovered no great theory, invented no great gizmo and composed no symphonies. It has been a full 50 years of change, challenge, satisfaction, contribution, excitement, grief, struggle, expansion. I am grateful for all I have received and hope I have given back in abundant measure."

"The unknown looms in front of me, and I sense the importance of doing and enjoying because time is finite. Life is concurrently full and vibrant, sad and frustrating. Sometimes it is too full, and I need to retreat to the quiet of my study, the North Woods, or just fantasize about joining a convent!"

Mary understood the brevity and significance of life - a mindset that will continue to inspire those fortunate enough to have known her. Even in her final days, amidst the challenges of cognitive decline, she never failed to share words of wisdom. At the last Korman family Christmas celebration, Mary's simple but profound guidance to her loved ones was:

"Everybody, be careful out there. Do what is needed. Take care of each other. Leave when it is needed."

Her wisdom, laughter, and vibrant spirit will be deeply missed and fondly remembered.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Martha Young Dana & Malcolm Boyd Dana; and life partner, Lee Hanley. Mary's memory will live on through her loved ones: her sisters Ruth, Nancy, and Liz; her sons Erik and Mark; and her cherished grandchildren-Casey, Anders, Isaac, Marcela, and Dylan.

A celebration of life will be held at her granddaughter Casey's home at 3717 Glendale Terrace, Minneapolis, MN 55410, on March 1, 2025, at 2 p.m. Photos and shared memories are encouraged, and flowers would be a lovely contribution.

Written in honor by: Casey Korman

# Tribute Wall

MK

“ Dear Mark, Eric and family; First of all, my sincere condolences on the passing of your Mom, Grandma, Sister, Aunt, Mother-in-law. I can imagine what a difficult time this is for all of you as you “ride” an emotional “roller-coaster.”

*I wanted to write to you also to explain my relationship with wonderful Mary and express my feelings. I met Mary in 1986 when we worked together for many years and also became very close friends right up to being able to hug her and express my love one week before her passing.*

*Mary was exemplary at her work.....she had a gift of being able to give clients tough news in a sincere, loving and direct way. She was an expert at nuance and could pick out a central theme when people, families or business colleagues were “stuck.” Even though she never knew what time it was, didn’t wear a watch she managed to arrive where expected on time!!!! Amazing! When “at the top of her game” she was the very best.*

*Through going to events, cooking club, probably hundreds of walks we became dear friends and shared our lives completely talking, supporting and helping one another. Thus, I knew that her love and pride was all about her sons and grandchildren. (Even though she was totally crazy about her “sisters!”). When Ruth visited her once the three of us sat at her dining room table singing songs from the 50’s (Johny Mathis being our all time favorite). Mark and Eric, you two gave your Mom so much pleasure and the “frosting on the cake” were the 5 grandchildren that you and your wives “produced.” I heard so so many stories about all of her grandchildren - It began with Casey when she at 3 would get dropped off at Nana’s and yell; “Nana I’m here!!!!”*

*When the twins skied expertly or worked on the fly fishing business I heard all about it showing me pictures of you two with great pleasure.*

*Mary loved when the Bloomington grandkids would visit, stay over and do your special stuff....baking pies, playing games and just hanging out! Her trips to Bloomington (even dropping food off during Covid) and taking the 3 of you to your places (work and practices, etc.) were things that she did because she loved being with each of*

you.

*During Covid Mary and I weekly continued our visits and sat outside at a distance in masks sharing, laughing and always supporting one another. We walked always for years (even at Founders Ridge).*

*And, I want to remind you that Mary had a great intellect, a big heart and was very athletic in her day too. She is the most non-judgmental and accepting person that I every knew.*

*I feel honored to say that I got to be Mary's close friend for 39 years and I think of her always.*

*And, finally, please know that I'm thinking of all of you as we wish Mary only "Rest In Peace" which she so richly deserves. In my Jewish faith, we say; "May her Memory be a Blessing!"*

*Sending love today and always, Susie Lewis*

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**mark Korman** - February 07, 2025 at 01:59 PM

MK

“ 4 files added to the tribute wall



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**marcela korman** - February 07, 2025 at 12:49 PM

MA

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**Mark** - February 07, 2025 at 12:19 PM

BV

*An elegant and beautifully written story of an incredible woman. Thank you Casey.*

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**Bobby Vandell** - February 23, 2025 at 09:18 AM

MA

“ 1 file added to the album Ma



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**Mark** - February 07, 2025 at 12:17 PM