



Gaydena Marlene Thompson

April 9, 1935 - December 31, 2019

Gaydena Marlene (Brown) Thompson, 84, of Vancouver, WA, passed away from natural causes on December 31st, 2019. She was born in Richfield, ID to Charles and Audra Brown. Gaye graduated from Shoshone High School in 1953 and Idaho State University in 1957.

After receiving her master's degree from Washington State in 1958, Gaye worked as a Physical Education teacher at the University of Idaho, where she met her future husband. One weekend, one of her students, Kenneth Thompson, asked her to a dance in front of all of her students - she declined! After several discussions with the faculty, she finally received permission and agreed to go to the dance with him. In 1962, after Ken graduated, they were married.

Gaye and Ken moved to Vancouver, WA where they gave birth to two sons: Brian and Bradley.

From 1962 to 1997, Gaye was an educator at Clark Community College where she taught swimming, fencing, dancing and multiple fitness classes. In 1977, Gaye was named the first female athletic director in the State of Washington.

Gaye's 35 years of influence in promoting a philosophy of lifelong fitness and health, even before the trend was fashionable, led to the establishment of a

new expanded fitness center at Clark College. In 1992, Gaye's legacy was honored with completion of the Thompson Fitness Center, and later inducted into the Clark College Hall of Fame.

After retirement, Gaye enjoyed gardening, researching genealogy, quilting, golfing, writing, and sharing time with family and friends.

Gaydena was well loved and respected in her community. As an educator she inspired the next generation to find joy in staying active. As a mother and grandmother, she demonstrated unconditional love. As a friend she was "supportive, encouraging, and she lived the philosophy of a person who looked at life with a glass half-full. She had a joy for living, and it was contagious."

"If my enthusiasm for what I do has left any impact on students, my colleagues and/or the institution, I hope that it is to be active, self-responsible, positive in nature and to enjoy life!" Gaydena Thompson

Gaydena was preceded in death by her husband, Kenneth; and brother, Charles.

She is survived by her sister, Karen; sons, Brian and Bradley (Nancy); and four grandchildren, Christopher, Katie, Clayton, and Gabriella.

A Celebration of Life will be held on February 1st at 2:00 PM, Gaiser Hall on the Clark College campus located at 1933 Fort Vancouver Way, Vancouver, WA.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to the Clark College Foundation. <https://www.clarkcollegefoundation.org/campaign/give> area of support-choose "OTHER" and specify Gaydena Thompson Fund.

Tribute Wall

DH

“ *David Harris lit a candle in memory of
Gaydena Marlene Thompson* ”



David Harris - January 16, 2020 at 12:00 AM