

Chopyak-Scheider Funeral Home, Inc.

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Mary Lou Swanson "Lou" Pierce

June 14, 1926 – April 14, 2024



Wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and educator, Mary Lou Swanson Pierce — a longtime resident of Endwell — came to the end of a long and happy life on April 14, 2024, at the age of 97.

Born in Jamestown on June 14, 1926, to Loren A. Swanson and A. Marie Dryburgh Swanson, Lou graduated from Jamestown High School, where she was a member of the girls athletics club, in 1944. She went on to Cortland State Teachers College (now SUNY Cortland), where she was a member of the Nu Sigma Chi sorority, the Aquatic Club and the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education and Recreation. Lou graduated in 1948 — on her 22nd birthday — with a Bachelor of Science in physical education. While at Cortland, she convinced a sorority sister to set her up on a date with Donald Edward Pierce. (Lou and another sorority sister drew straws ... and it was rigged so Lou would win.) She and Don were wed on Aug. 22, 1948, and their marriage endured for almost 67 years, until Don's death in July 2015.

After graduating from Cortland, Lou worked as a physical education teacher in Newark Valley until 1955, the year her first child was born. She was a stay-at-home mom as she and Don added four more children to the family, returning as a substitute teacher (mostly in the Maine-Endwell and Union-Endicott districts) in the late 1960s. She then taught at multiple U-E schools, part-time from 1972-1980 and fulltime from 1980-87.

Even as she rejoined the workforce, Lou maintained order in a loud, rambunctious house filled with children and pets.

She had a lifelong interest in sports, beginning with dance as a child and continuing with swimming, basketball and intramurals in high school and college. A huge Mets fan, she watched virtually every game on TV. When the Mets weren't on, she would often change channels to the Yankees and root for whoever was playing against them.

As an adult, Lou bowled in several leagues — she was once named to a Binghamton Press all-star team — and golfed. She competed at both New York and national Senior Games, bringing home multiple medals, and enjoyed attending her children's and grandchildren's games.

Lou learned to knit as a child, and continued knitting into her 90s — she was rarely without her knitting needles and yarn, even when she attended sporting events. She created unforgettable afghans, sweaters, mittens, scarves and Christmas stockings for family members. She also enjoyed sewing and counted cross stitch.

Lou and Don moved to Endwell in 1957, and lived there together for almost six decades. (Don was the principal at Hooper School, Endwell Elementary and Homer Brink, and later a longtime member of the M-E school board.) After they retired, they enjoyed traveling the country in their motorhome, generally spending winters somewhere warm.

Lou is survived by her children, Kimberley Pierce, Timothy (Renee) Pierce, Scott Pierce, Lynne Pierce and Betsy (John) Pope; her grandchildren, Courtney (Galen) Richmond, Brittany (Adam) Lapinski, Colin Pierce (Taylor White), Amanda Pierce (Jeremy Tyrell), Hillary Pierce, Jonathon Pierce, Caleigh Pope (Dan Glista); her great-grandchildren, Lila Lou and Danny Richmond, Cameron and Charlie Lapinski, and Remi Tyrrell; and her sister, Barbara J. Swanson Williamson. She was predeceased by her parents; her brother, Harold Swanson; and her husband, Don.

The family will receive friends Tuesday from 5-7 p.m. and Wednesday from 9-10 a.m. at the Chopyak-Scheider Funeral Home, 326 Prospect St., Binghamton. A celebration of Lou's life will be offered by Rev. Lea Harding on Wednesday at 10 a.m. at the funeral home. Entombment will follow in Vestal Hills Memorial Park Cemetery.

Final Resting Place

Vestal Hills Memorial Park Cemetery

3997 Old Vestal Road

Vestal, NY 13850

Arrangements by Chopyak-Scheider Funeral Home, Inc. • chopyak-scheider.com