



Jean Allen

October 28, 1921 - February 18, 2013
Paw Paw, MI

LIFE STORY / OBITUARY



VISITATION

Friday, February 22, 2013
10:00 AM to 11:00 AM EST
Betzler Life Story Funeral Homes
Paw Paw Location
60900 Michigan 40
Paw Paw, MI 49079
(269) 657-3870
[Driving Directions](#)

SERVICE

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11:00 AM EST
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CONTRIBUTIONS

At the family's request memorial contributions are to be made to those listed below. Please forward payment directly to the memorial of your choice.

Faith Baptist Church
56070 Murray Street
Mattawan, MI 49071
(269) 658-3391
[Web Site](#)

Those who knew and loved Jean Allen have so many precious memories that will never be forgotten. The common threads throughout her fabric of time were her thoughtful words, her selfless deeds, and her compassionate spirit, but it was her tender heart that knew no bounds that sets her apart from the rest. Throughout her life, she considered her family to be her greatest gift and blessing, and spending time with them brought her a world of happiness. Jean was a woman of great strength who worked hard throughout her life, and persevered through trials that came her way, always remaining true to the joy that was in her heart.

Jean was born on October 28, 1921, in Chicago, Illinois to Elmer and Esther (Felt) Holm. She was one of four children in her family with two brothers, William and Phillip, and one sister, Constance. Jean was 2 years old when her parents moved the family to the quiet suburbs of Paw Paw, Michigan, settling on Hazen Street, where they raised chickens and cows, and had 2 acres of grapes and a fishing pier on Maple Lake. A few years later, her parents bought a house at 500 East Main Street in Paw Paw, which was only a 1/2 block away from Jean's school. Her father was a Marine veteran who served in World War I. However, he was shot in both legs while in battle in France and because of his injuries, he mainly helped at home with the children while her mother worked various administrative jobs, including as a stenographer. Jean remembers running down to the corner Shell Gas Station to buy Dutch Owl cigars for her father, and then used one of the empty boxes to make a homemade violin for her 1st grade class.

Jean was a typical girl, who loved to play with the doll that her Uncle Albert got her for Christmas when she was 10, as well as cut out paper dolls. She learned to play the piano (because she wanted to be just like her best friend who took lessons) and performed Parade of the Wooden Soldiers for her recital. Jean got into her fair share of mischief too, like when she played beauty shop with her sister and rolled her hair with a water/sugar solution, which made it very stiff and her sister very mad! Jean loved playing outside, especially after her father got her a brand new bike when she was 15 from Montgomery Ward in Chicago. She and her girlfriends would tour around Paw Paw, heading out to Lake Brownwood to buy ice cream and once rode all the way to Lawton. Sadly, Jean's father died when she was a senior in high school, and her uncle took her bike to Wisconsin and she never got it back.

Jean received her education in the Paw Paw area schools and went on to graduate in May 1939. Her aspirations were to be an airline stewardess, but she decided to go to nursing school first. However, when her father passed away, she could no longer afford to go to nursing school, so she enrolled in the Home Economics Program at Western Michigan University, and attended Parsons Business College in the summer of 1939. Jean worked during her first year at college, taking care of children and cleaning houses. Then, in March 1940, she returned home to live with her mom in Paw Paw and commuted to school each day with friends. It wasn't all work and no play for Jean for on Friday nights she took the bus downtown to the roller rink to hang out with her friends, but was sure to catch the last bus home at 11 p.m. Once out of school for the summer, Jean took a job in Lansing doing typing for the State of Michigan, and stayed at the YWCA.

On Memorial Day 1941, Jean's life took an exciting new direction when she met Morris James Mesick at the gas station across the street from the outdoor drive-in in Paw Paw. She was sitting at a table talking with friends when Morris sat down beside her and with that, their love story had begun. After dating for a time, Jean and Morris were married, and they were blessed with four children: Rosemary, Rodney, Judy and John. Unfortunately, their marriage eventually ended in divorce, and Jean had the responsibility of caring and supporting four children by herself. She worked various jobs in order to provide for her kids, including as a waitress at Village Restaurant, McNamara Trucking in Kalamazoo, Peacock Dry Cleaners, Frontenac Winery, Dykman House and Arnold Fishing Tackle. How Jean found the time and energy to do what she did is a testament to her commitment to her family.

Some time later, Jean found love again when she met James Allen at The Village Restaurant in Paw Paw, and they were married in 1965 by the Justice of the Peace. Together, the two loved to travel and often headed to Northern Michigan with their camper in tow. Once there, Jean took the ferry across to Mackinaw Island, where she spent the day riding around the island on a bike, and she didn't leave until buying some fabulous island fudge. Most of the time, Jim stayed at the camper to take care of their dog, while Jean took a trip to Beulah, Michigan to buy cherry pies at The Cherry Hut. Their travels also took them to Tarpon Springs, Florida a few times to visit friends that Jim had worked for, and to Missouri to see Jim's daughter, Mabel. Jean liked to keep her feet on the ground when she traveled, though once she took a plane to Plano, Texas, to visit her daughter, Judy, and they got to tour the Mary Kay Cosmetic facility.

Time together as a family was always important to Jean, and there was no greater joy in her life than being with her children and grandchildren. Her family filled her mobile home to the brim for Christmas every year, and being the great cook and baker that she was, Jean made the most wonderful feast for them to share together. One of her specialties was her almond coffee cake, which she made in a special cast iron pan she bought at Busy Bees Flea Market. Eventually, the family grew so much that they moved Christmas gatherings as well as birthday celebrations to her daughter Rosemary's house. Jean was very adamant about staying in touch with family and friends, and she had an old typewriter she did all her writing on. She also loved to read books and magazines, particularly "Living" by Martha Stewart, and "Reminisce", a magazine that brought back great memories in her life.

After living independently for several years, Jean moved to the Bronson Nursing and Rehabilitation Home in February 2009. She never wanted to be a burden to her children, so she knew this was the best place for her to be at this point in her life. Her hearing began to diminish as well as her eyesight, which was so very difficult for her because she couldn't do the things she loved - reading, typing and hearing her family. It wasn't long before Jean won the hearts of many of the staff at the nursing home; one in particular was Amy. She felt that Amy truly cared about the people she helped. Jean spent her days watching the birds at the feeders outside her window, and visiting the therapy room to cuddle with the skinny, black cat named Molly. She was always sharing her candy with her roommate, Dorothy, who loved chocolate - often times giving more to her than keeping for herself.

Although Jean will be greatly missed, her legacy of love and dedication leaves her loved ones with wonderful memories and a strong foundation to look to for comfort.

Jean Allen, age 91, died on Monday, February 18, 2013, at Bronson Nursing & Rehab Center, Lawton. Services will be held on Friday, February 22, at 11:00 a.m. at the Life Story Funeral Home, Betzler & Thompson-Paw Paw; 60900 M-40, 657-3870, with visitation beginning at 10:00 a.m. Cremation will follow with burial at Prospect Hill Cemetery, Paw Paw.

Jean was preceded in death by her first husband, Morris Mesick, and second husband, James Allen, in 2000; and her brother, Bill Holm. Surviving are her 4 children: Rosemary (Tom) Schallhorn, Rodney Mesick, Judy Smith and John Mesick; 7 grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren, 2 great-great-grandchildren; 2 siblings: Connie Henley and Philip Holm; and many nieces and nephews. Please visit Jean's personal web page at www.lifestorynet.com, where you can share a favorite memory or photo and sign her online guest book before coming to the funeral home. Memorial donations may be directed to Faith Baptist Church, Mattawan.

