

Janet Watson Zaiser

Janet Watson Zaiser of Olympia, Washington passed away Thursday, July 9th, at Providence St. Peter Hospital from complications following surgery.

Janet was born in 1927 in Evanston, Illinois to James Thomas Watson and Clara Beatrice Meissner. She moved to Mt. Carmel, Illinois in 1936, graduating from Mt. Carmel High School in 1945. Janet was always quite venturesome, taking flying lessons in the family Ercoupe, and became a proficient water skier and swimmer at their cottage at Crystal Lake, Michigan.



After High School she attended Indiana University, graduating in 1949 with a degree in Speech and Hearing Therapy. She then moved to Connecticut and taught in the Hartford School System and later in Simsbury. In summer of 1950 she toured England, Scotland, France, Germany, and Italy. On her return to Hartford she met and married Ernest Mathew Zaiser, an Engineer at Hamilton Standard Propellers in August of 1951. They lived in West Simsbury for many years. Their three boys and one daughter were born in the Hartford Hospital.

In 1966, Ernie took a job with McDonnell Aircraft and the family moved to St. Louis, Missouri. In 1969, Ernie was appointed General Manager of a McDonnell subsidiary to conduct a license production program in Japan of the F-4 fighter aircraft. That year Janet, Ernie, and the four children moved to Nagoya, Japan and Janet learned to speak Japanese. Summers were spent at their cottage at Lake Nojiri in the "Japan Alps" in Nagano Prefecture. And in winters Janet continued her skiing, now on snow rather than water. She was very active with the Nagoya International School, helping to start and run a thrift store where the expatriate families at the school could get clothing of proper size and foods that were unavailable on the market such as Australian, New Zealand, and Danish cheese.

In 1973, Ernie was appointed Director of the Japanese subsidiary of McDonnell Douglas and the family moved to Tokyo. She continued her volunteer activities at the American School in Japan and with organizations such as Tokyo English Lifeline. She also traveled extensively to Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Guam, and Saipan.

1980 brought a move back to Nagoya where Ernie was appointed Vice President Operations of the F-15 license production program. It was at this time that she became active with the Buyong Sponsorship Program in the Philippines, started by daughter Martha. This program sent 65 deserving students to high school and 31 to college, provided the elementary school and community with electricity and water, brought drinking water into Buyong village, constructed toilets in three villages for the public use, and various other projects in the community. It currently provides a meal every day for the 680 students at the school and medicine for the public Health Center in the village.

She traveled to Mactan Island, Cebu Province in the Philippines every subsequent year for the next 28 in support of the program. She also taught an orientation course for a dozen Australian wives who had come to Nagoya with their husbands. She was a member of the Nagoya Union Church.

In October 1990, Ernie retired and they moved to Olympia. Janet was active in Olympia Chapter CF, P.E.O., the Westminster Presbyterian Church and various other local groups. She volunteered at Capital Medical Center and was a bailiff at the Thurston County Superior Court. Her main passion was the Buyong Program for which she worked tirelessly throughout the year managing the funds and frequent correspondence to sustain close contact.

She was preceded in death by her parents, her brother James, and her son Paul. Survivors are her husband Ernie, sons John and Carl, daughter Martha, grandchildren Andrew, Erica, Kristine, and brother Kimball. A memorial will be held at a later date in the Philippines where her ashes will be placed beside those of her son Paul in his memorial garden at the Buyong Elementary School, which was established by grateful residents of that village. Donations may be made to the "Buyong Support Program" at 6636 Milano Ct. SE, Olympia, WA 98513.