



Marlene Joyce O'Brien

October 12, 1933 - August 26, 2023

In Loving Memory of Marlene Joyce O'Brien

Marlene Joyce O'Brien, born on October 12, 1933, in Yakima, WA, embarked on a life that was as vibrant and diverse as the colors she painted onto her canvas. She was the cherished only child of George and Marie Norman, and her upbringing was filled with the warmth of close cousins, friends, and the love of her family's legacy.

Raised in the embrace of her grandfather George Eckleman's visionary spirit, Marlene learned the value of hard work and the rewards of owning one's destiny. Her father, George, instilled in her a love for the land and a deep connection to her roots. From tending the family's ranches during summers to mastering the art of driving at the age of twelve, Marlene took on life's adventures with determination and grace.

Choosing her own path, she ventured to the "big city" of Seattle, where she attended the University of Washington, straying from the family's Washington State University tradition. There, she joined the Delta Gamma Sorority and carved her place among the stars. Her love story with her high school sweetheart, Bill Charbonneau, led to a marriage that was tragically cut short after 4 months when Bill lost his life in a military plane accident. In the face of adversity, Marlene's resilience shone brightly.

She embarked on a new chapter, becoming one of the pioneering women to attend Harvard (Radcliffe)'s first MBA program. Her intellect, determination, and unyielding spirit led her to New York City in 1959, where she excelled in advertising and marketing. It was there that she met Richard O'Brien, a US Navy officer from Boston, and together they built a life defined by love and adventure. Settling in Sacramento, California, they became parents to two boys and embedded themselves in their community.

Marlene's dedication was unwavering as she balanced motherhood, civic involvement, and political causes. Later moving to the Portland, Oregon area in 1969, she continued her journey, deeply committed to her family, St John's Episcopal Church, her volunteerism, and social interests. Marlene's love for art manifested in her painting, capturing her vibrant essence and inner grace. She was a friend, a confidante, an essay editor, volunteer to many causes and a constant presence in the lives she touched.

Through her accomplishments, her heart remained tethered to her family. Marlene's love for her six grandchildren was boundless, and she reveled in their presence. Her home was a haven of laughter, stories, and the kind of playful games only "gram" could conjure. Marlene's intelligence, wit, and empathy shone in every role she played – wife, mother, friend, and grandmother.

As the chapters of her life turned, Marlene found solace in her faith, joining the Antiochian Christian Orthodox Church. Her words continued to paint a picture of wisdom and insight, as she contributed articles to local newspapers, sharing her unique perspective with the world.

Marlene Joyce O'Brien, a beacon of light and inspiration, passed away on 8/26/23. Her legacy lives on through her children, grandchildren, and the lives

she touched. She leaves behind a tapestry of memories, lessons, and laughter that will continue to shape the lives of all who knew and loved her. May she find eternal peace in the presence of God, she so beautifully embraced in life. Marlene is survived by her sons Tim O'Brien and Doug O'Brien (Marianna). Grandchildren Kaitlin, Brendan, Nicole, Connor, Jack and George O'Brien.

Cemetery Details

Willamette National Cemetery

11800 SE Mt Scott Blvd
Portland, OR 97086

Tribute Wall



“ *Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Marlene Joyce O'Brien.*



September 02, 2023 at 01:35 PM



“ *Doug and Tim, I am so sorry to learn about Marlene's passing. She remained a steadfast and loyal friend thru the years. Her compassion and words of wisdom after I lost my husband Steve in 2918 were meaningful and heartfelt. She had a great sense of humor and I always appreciated her sharp wit. Thankfully we can rejoice that she is reunited with loved ones in heaven. God bless you and your families, Hope Dransfeldt*

Hope Dransfeldt - September 01, 2023 at 02:55 PM



“ *Tim and Doug, I am so so sorry to hear of your mother's passing. She has been a great and loyal friend for many many years. I am comforted by the knowledge that she knew the Lord and is dancing with the angels today. Blessing to you and your family. Lynn Wagoner*

Lynn Wagoner - September 01, 2023 at 01:55 PM

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“ *Tim and Doug, your mom will be greatly missed. Always welcoming and graceful. She was witty and smart. Her love for you, her grand children, and extended family is something she always shared. All my love, to you all.*

Jill O'Brien - August 31, 2023 at 03:38 AM

DO

“ *So sorry to hear, Doug, Tim and the whole family: although I didn't know your mom well, I can tell she was one of the greats—a solid force who touched many. My condolences.*

Dan O'Brien - August 30, 2023 at 10:00 PM