

# Claudine Garby

1929 – 2022

Dr. Claudine Merle Pier Garby, 1929-2022 Claudine Garby passed away peacefully on December 13, 2022, at her retirement home in Boulder, Colorado after a long battle with Alzheimer's. She was born on July 19, 1929, in Jackson, Michigan to Effie Wright Pier and Roy Pier.

A lifelong student and educator, she began her career in education at age 18 as the sole teacher of Richardson School, a one-room country schoolhouse in Michigan. Claudine was just two years older and about 100 pounds lighter than several of her roughest 8th graders - who gave her a crash course in maintaining discipline while further motivating her to instill the passion to learn in her students.

Undaunted, Claudine became an outstanding and highly respected educator. She later taught at Clement School and Mary D. Mitchell School, while attending college every summer and eventually earning her BA in English. During this time, she refined her passion for the accurate use of words and developed an aversion to the misuse of homonyms.

In 1957, she earned her MA in Education from the University of Michigan, graduating at the same ceremony where her fiance, Louis Garby, received his Doctorate in Aerospace Engineering. They married that summer, moved to Sunnyvale, California, and two years later moved to Boulder, Colorado.

Shortly after arriving in Boulder, she gave birth to twins Gage and Leigh, then a few years later to Craig and then Eric.

For ten years, Claudine stayed home and raised her family. When she wasn't teaching a horde of excited children a game to play up and down the block, she could be found sipping iced tea and laughing with friends on the back porch, or entertaining groups of professors and their spouses at dinner parties.

Throughout these active years, she was also involved in the Paddock Elementary School PTA, the League of Women Voters, and local Democratic committees.

In 1968 Claudine returned to graduate school, earning her Doctorate in Education Administration in 1974.

During this time, she directed the Office of Continuing Education at CU while supervising student teachers. She next became the assistant principal and then the principal of several schools in Longmont, Colorado, in the St. Vrain School District, including Columbine, Burlington, Rocky Mountain, and Central. She finished her career as Director of Elementary Education. She was beloved and respected by hundreds of fellow administrators, teachers, and students.

After retiring, Claudine remained politically and socially active, chairing various Democratic organizations, the University of Women's Club at CU Boulder, and traveling the world with friends, while staying heavily involved with family. She earned the Margaret Willard Award in 2007, an award given to women who are exceptional role models in their communities.

At her 80th birthday party, former students from as far away as Alaska, Michigan, and Texas flew to Colorado to wish her a Happy Birthday. Her students reminisced about her warmth, kindness, strength, honesty, and positive impact on those lucky enough to have been in contact with her. She believed in her students' unlimited potential and the tremendous benefits of an educated mind.

Claudine was a wonderful mother and grandmother. She was generous, boundlessly optimistic, and always up for a new adventure.

Her large family will miss her dreadfully - and will not be misusing any homonyms.

Claudine was preceded in death by her parents Effie and Roy Pier, her husband, Lou Garby, and her siblings George Pier and Evalyn Pier Goodman. She is survived by her children Gage (Brenda) Garby, Leigh (Russ) Briggs, Craig (Linda) Garby, and Eric (Kristine) Garby, and grandchildren Michelle (Nicholas) Vitko, Koko Meinig, Suzanne Meinig, Bryce Garby, Logan Garby, Louis Garby, Anna Garby, Max Garby, and Maia Garby, and great-grandchildren Nathan Vitko and Mallory Vitko.

A memorial service is being planned for summer 2023; a further announcement will be posted at that time. In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to the Alzheimer's Association or the University of Women's Club Scholarship Fund which provides scholarships for non-traditional female students.