LYN ZAIS, BS, MS
By

Lynette (Lyn) Zais was born in Stanley, WI, on January 20, 1942, She graduated from Stanley High School and attended Luther College and the University of Wisconsin at Eau Claire, graduating with a major in biology and a minor in psychology, She married her high school and college sweetheart, Donald Zais, in 1964. Don and Lyn shared their first home together in Sparta before moving to Wisconsin Rapids and then to Marshfield in 1967.

Lyn was a constant student in life. Formally, she earned two master's degrees, and informally she was always open to trying new experiences, such as foods, travels, books, and subjects, Her love of learning and education led her into a job in substitute teaching followed by her dream career as a guidance counselor at Mid-State Technical College helping others find their own passions, She received the Wisconsin Association for Counseling and Development award in 1994, the National Career Development Association award in 1998 and the Wisconsin Vocational Association Professional Excellence award in 1999. Lyn was also an educator and counselor to countless members of the community as well as family members, frequently supporting them through their career decisions and other life changes. Following her recent death, her husband, Don, says that he has heard from many of those she helped.

Lyn Zais had a passion for social justice and took whatever steps she could to provide opportunities and access to those in need. She was involved with immigrant families coming to Marshfield, including from South Asia and Mexico, finding housing, providing financial assistance and advice.

Lyn joined a group of fourteen from her church who studied the southern border immigration issue and then spent a home stay with a Mexican family to learn more about why people were immigrating to the US. She studied issues thoroughly and then worked tirelessly to support just causes. She was on the Sisters Cities Committee and she and her husband, Don, took the first Marshfield traveling students to Argentina. Lyn was on the founding committee for the Marshfield Cultural Fair.

Lyn was very musical, especially as a piano player. She taught piano to many and was a frequent accompanist for countless students at music festivals, church, and recitals. She participated in the bell choir at her church. Lyn fed her love of music attending many musicals and operas.

Lyn was widely known throughout Marshfield for her participation in various civic functions. She served on the Library Board and the School Board. She was a regular at the Kitchen Table restaurant where she delighted in meeting new people at the community tables. Even in her neighborhood, she, along with her husband, Don, brought people together by hosting the creation of a mulligan stew and outdoor gathering every year. She was a fixture at First Presbyterian Church, always urging that community to help everyone be more fair, equitable, and protective of all people and the planet we share. She received the United Way Volunteer of the year award. She was the first secretary for Marshfield Area Habitat for Humanity, established in 1995.



Lyn Zais

Lyn will be long remembered by the hundreds of lives she personally touched through her life helping others. I chose a particular picture of Lyn, taken during the UW New York Theater tour, to accompany this essay because it expresses a lot of what she was about. She reminded me of Mary Poppins, cheerfully arriving on the scene with her delightful sense of humor, her intelligence, and her love of people to address the problem of the moment, reach a solution, and energetically zip away to the next event.

About Lyn, Barb Gillespie, a good friend, stated, "Lyn's participation at our church was central to who she was. She led the committee which crafted the FPC mission statement over 20 years ago, which has truly guided our church in becoming more welcoming through the years." That mission statement embodies the essence of Lyn's character:

"First Presbyterian Church, Marshfield, Wisconsin seeks to welcome all to join us on our journey of faith, denying no one, based upon his or her particular human condition, participation in the life of the church. We want to be a safe place, a sanctuary where people are accepted, included, and cared for as they are. We will be agents of God's transforming power, aligning ourselves with the Holy Spirit as we pray, worship, learn, share fellowship and serve together. By attending to the love of Jesus Christ in our midst, we discover a deepening faith that makes a difference in our lives. As a community based on God's love, we strive to be of service to our neighbors and to the world."