



Obituary of Darlene P. Vian

Darlene LeMay Pearson Vian, 78, a resident of Palo Alto, CA, for over 51 years, passed away on 9 February 2011. She was born in Long Beach, CA, to Alice Juliann Knutson Pearson and Ransom Levi (“Lee”) Pearson. She was raised in Wilmington and Compton, CA, graduating from Compton High School and Junior College. She attended the University of California at Berkeley and received a history degree in 1954 from the recently opened Sacramento State College. In 1952 she married Theodore W. (“Ted”) Vian and raised a family in Sacramento and then Palo Alto. She married Dr. Brian P. McCune in 1992.

Ms. Vian worked at the Stanford University Medical School for over 38 years. She was Secretary of the Faculty Senate for nearly 10 years. She was hired in 1980 by Prof. Edward H. (“Ted”) Shortliffe to help establish the M.S./Ph.D. program in Medical Information Sciences (now Biomedical Informatics) and soon discovered that working with students was her true calling. As Student Services Administrator, she managed recruiting, admissions, degree programs, traineeships, social events at her home, the annual retreat at Asilomar Conference Grounds, and alumni relations, including an annual alumni banquet. Perhaps her greatest contribution came as an advisor to the students, helping them deal with issues of funding, coursework, thesis writing, deciding whether to leave school early, and personal problems. She was largely responsible for the esprit and positive experience that two generations of graduate students enjoyed. As an example of her unstinting devotion, she was still consulting to the program one week before her death. In recognition of her incredible work, Ms. Vian was awarded the Stanford Graduate Service Award in 1999.

Ms. Vian loved entertaining and was an accomplished cook. She specialized in cooking effortlessly for groups from four to 40. Her experience was captured in the self-published cookbook, *Cooking for Compliments*. For 15 years she hosted a banquet honoring the speaker of Stanford’s Jonathan J. King Lectureship, which she helped establish.

Darlene loved music and theater. She attended the San Francisco Opera (for 37 years), Symphony, and Ballet; Music@Menlo; and Foothill Music Theatre. She was a long-time subscriber to TheatreWorks, American Conservatory Theater, and Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and regularly journeyed to New York City to see current plays. She also loved movies, reading, gardening, international travel, and the Monterey Bay Aquarium.

Above all, Ms. Vian enjoyed being surrounded by friends and family. She is survived by her husband; son John T. Vian and daughter-in-law Mary-Ellen H. Vian of Atlanta, GA; daughter Emily V. Knaggs and son-in-law Trevor N. Knaggs of Pleasanton, CA; daughter Lisa V. Hunter and son-in-law Scott A. Hunter of Mercer Island, WA; and sister Kay P. Stewart and brother-in-law John N. Stewart of Pleasanton. She also leaves six beloved grandchildren: Lee H. Vian, Mary-Kate Vian, Erik V. Knaggs, Kevan V. Knaggs, Chloe V. Hunter, and Ethan V. Hunter.

Ms. Vian’s ashes were scattered in Monterey Bay, off her vacation home at Monterey Dunes Colony. There was a private party celebrating her life in May 2011. Memorial gifts may be made to Silicon Valley Community Foundation (Darlene Vian Memorial Fund, c/o Brian P. McCune, 535 Tennyson Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94301) to endow support of her beloved Biomedical Informatics students.