



*A Life
Remembered*

Arden Eversmeyer

April 4, 1931 – November 14, 2022



Celebration of Life Program

Reception / Mingle

Introduction and Greeting: Roxanne Chericco

Remembrances from Friends

Closing Toast



LOAFers Remember Arden

Arden was one of the greatest wimmin that I have ever had the pleasure of knowing. She lived a life of great service to our Lesbian community as well as other communities throughout the United States. She was honored and acknowledged numerous times for her gifts to our society and yet she remained unassuming and humble at all times. Arden was one of the first lesbians I met when I arrived in Houston in 1992. She made me feel like I was a welcome part of LOAF and introduced me to the wonderful wimmin of Houston. She interviewed me for the OLOC study of older Lesbians. It was a way of preserving the stories of the lives of older Lesbians who lived through harder times. Arden was an innovator and an incredibly loving person. It made my heart smile whenever she called me "SUGAH". I'm forever grateful for her friendship and will never forget her kind ways. Goodbye to a beautiful woman...beautiful in many, many ways 🥰❤️❤️

Page Allen

I joined LOAF at least 10 years ago. Arden introduced me to woman's music and that made a great change. I went to concerts here in Houston found out about Woman's concerts in Maddison, Wisconsin and so much joy. I finally had concerts in my home for several years. I miss Arden, she was such a special lady.



Sandi Lorifield

Isaac Newton wrote "If I can see further it is by standing upon the shoulders of giants." Arden's shoulders lifted all of us way, way up. Thank you, Arden, for allowing us to see the opportunity for better futures.

Deb Murphy



LOAFers Remember Arden (continued)

I had known of Arden for at least 25 years. I got to know her better in the last 18 months of her life. My favorite memory of her is from the summer of 2021. We attended the National Women's Music Festival in Wisconsin—this was our first year (Donna and me). She was constantly moving during the event. At one point, I caught her and said that I really liked the festival's music. She said: "Keep coming back, every year. The music gets better every time,"

I thanked her for the advice and will likely follow it.

Elizabeth McLane



I met Arden in 1987, when I was partnered with her niece. I was active-duty USAF so didn't see much of her until I retired in 1998. Arden gently brought me out of my deep dark military-induced closet, by introducing me to women's music (Cris Williamson, Brabara Higbe and Teresa Trull together in Ft Worth-Kaboom!), lesbian fiction from the LOAF Library, and the National Women's Music Festival. When her niece and I split after 18 years, she said, "You are my family, always." I am forever in her debt for inviting me along the pathways of the last 25 years of her life with Charlotte. They opened my eyes, heart and life to the wonderful world of loving Sisterhood.



Barb Kucharczyk

I have to admit I am an Arden Groupie! She changed my life. She gave me confidence in myself I did not know I had. She pushed me to reach higher, strive harder and accomplish more. It was her love of women and their spirit that she saw and reviled in their lives. And she talked about it. And she got you to talk about it. Then she wrote about it. So much to be said, but I will keep it brief here: icon, Legend, Hero, Mentor, Champion, Trailblazer, Booster, Friend, Confidant, Buddy, Historian.

I am grateful to have had her in my life.

Judy Woods

To tell the truth, I am at a loss of words to convey what her (Arden's) loss means to me and to the organizations and people that she was connected to. She was someone I could trust and believe, the person that I could ask about history, people, organizations and motivations.

Sara Fernandez

Arden was in my top ten of most admired women. I remember when we were in a group called Womynspace in the 1980's and her expressing interest in establishing a group for older Lesbians. She cared so much about community and made such a difference for the better for older Lesbians. ~

Deborah Bell



LOAFers Remember Arden (continued)

I recall sitting down with Arden to ask her about some specific language in our LOAF bylaws. She regaled me with stories of the "beginning" of LOAF. The beginning of live music with house concerts; the beginning of WOTM with 2nd Saturday tea dances, the beginnings of Margarita Mondays and Fishy Sundays, etc. It struck me how important it was to her keep us all connected and how open she was to anything that would help get more of "us" out and connected with one another. She was usually so quiet around me that I was struck at how huge her personality was. I will miss her presence and forever try to help us reach her goals.

Dawn Harrell

My condolences to the family and friends of Arden. Our community has lost a great visionary. I met Arden at her home when I was 34 years old. I wanted to join in on the formation fun of what became LOAF. Arden told me that I was too young for membership consideration. I recognized that I simply did not have enough in common with my peer age group. Finally, I came of age to become a LOAF member. I was thrilled to visit with Arden after so many years had passed.

Alice Tomasello

Arden reminded me of a butterfly. She touched everything in her path, a little here, a little there. All she had to hear was "go!" and she was off on a new adventure! She was childlike, in awe of Christmas lights and new places to see. Women in the Arts was one of her all-time favorites, again in awe and fascination of all there was. She loved and lived her life to the fullest and like no other. I will surely miss my playmate.

Lavita Marks

I have tried hard to express my admiration of Arden and what she meant to me. The day I met her she opened her home and her heart, and welcomed me. I have known several strong women in my life. But none I admired as much as I did her.

She was more than strong. She was a leader we all looked up to. She was a warm and caring listener who lead with a gentle hand. Her natural humility made her that much more admirable. She has touched more lives than I can imagine. Always with respect and love. Her passing leaves a hole in humanity I can't imagine ever being filled.

There will be great women in our future. But none can replace Arden!

Brenda Kruger

Arden was a reliable and caring teacher at heart with a deep well of knowledge. She was the person that I could ask about history, people, organizations and motivations and never have a doubt about her answers. My condolences to everyone who was connected to her by: family ties, friendships, interests, dreams and purpose. May her stories comfort us and lead us on.

Alice Tomasello

LOAFers Remember Arden (continued)

It's hard to isolate one memory of Arden; there are so many for me. But one that stands clear was the organization and presentation of the OLOHP conference in October of 2013; The gathering of women from all over and from many areas of expertise in women's history, literature, and music was a wonderful thing to work on and to be a part of. I shall miss her greatly !!

Margaret Thibodeaux

Upon entering Woman Space, years before LOAF, I first saw/met Arden. She was sitting in a semi-dark corner, the only older lesbian there. Sitting close by her was my future partner Noelia, the only Hispanic there also. Arden became her support person from there on.

Years later, as I was living in hospice with Nonie (another breast cancer victim), Noelia waited for two women to come for last visits! Carolyn Mobley, with her guitar to sing her last gospel song, the other was Arden! I could tell it was hard for Arden, since her partner, Tommie had died of cancer few yrs. before meeting Noelia! It was tough for her, but she came! She's always been there for us! Now LOAF's guardian angel!

Lucretia Copeland

I had only been introduced to Arden after I joined LOAF. I knew she was a lesbian legacy in the making when I read her Herstory stories but getting to chat with her at meetings and WOTM at Neon boots was more personable and enlightened me to the kind and amazing woman she is behind the public persona I had seen. I loved her almost instantly. She would slip a dry humorous remark in conversation that would leave me taken aback...then she would smile with that twinkle in her eye and continue on with the conversation without skipping a beat. Sure, I would have loved more time with her, but I am so glad I was able to get a glimpse of the woman behind all the amazing work she did to preserve the telling of older lesbians' stories. She will be missed by many; I miss her. As she said more than once, "You don't have to climb Mount Everest to be interesting. Everyone has an amazing story."



Danita Cole

We didn't have the pleasure of knowing Arden as well or as long as a lot of folks. We knew her name as the founder of LOAF and had attended LOAF events through the years. We have now become LOAF members the last few years and have thoroughly enjoying the group she founded. What a wonderful vision she had! We also knew of her work on the history of our local GLBT community. She came to one of our Shell locations and presented to our GLBT group, SEAShell, as part of Shell's diversity efforts. We will always remember Arden, her vision and hold her in high esteem.

With love & respect,

Vickie McClanahan & Regina Dotson

Houston Activist Arden Eversmeyer Dead at 91, Remembered as Passionate Advocate for Lesbian Seniors

Sam González Kelly

Nov. 30, 2022

Retirement, for many, is a time to kick up your feet and enjoy the hard-earned comforts of life after decades in the labor force. For Jean Arden Eversmeyer, retirement was when her life's work really started.

The prominent activist, who went by Arden, died on Nov. 14 at 91, leaving behind a legacy as a powerful leader and advocate for lesbians in Houston, specifically the elderly. Her work provided vital connections for older lesbians, who were often disconnected from support. A University of Houston librarian who specializes in the field said she had "an enormous impact on LGBTQ+ history across several decades."

"This is a hard one, because (Arden) was so well-respected and admired in the community, knowing the impact she had," said her longtime friend, Deborah Moncrief Bell, 72.

Eversmeyer was born in Wisconsin on April 4, 1931, and moved to Dallas with her family in 1943, according to a paid obituary. After graduating from Texas State College for Women and Sam Houston State University, she would go on to work for 30 years in Texas public schools, spending most of her career teaching health, physical education and drivers education in the Pasadena and Houston Independent School Districts before she retired in 1981.

Home for LGBTQ+ seniors: Law Harrington Senior Living Center in Third Ward offers affordable, 'LGBTQ-affirming' home for seniors

Eversmeyer moved to Houston in the 1950s after meeting her first partner, Tommie Russum, at a softball game in the city. After Russum died of cancer in 1985, Eversmeyer embarked on a road trip through California visiting senior LGBT groups. She founded Lesbians Over the Age of 50 (LOAF) in 1987 with the aim of ensuring lesbians could continue to lead active social lives as they aged.

"After a few months (after Russum's passing), I began to feel the need to explore community. Already retired, the necessity of being closeted was gone. I soon discovered there was no group for mid-life and old lesbians in Houston, and began the search for such groups around the U.S.," Eversmeyer wrote in the "History of LOAF."

That same year, she met Charlotte Avery, whom she married in 2008. Avery died in 2018.

LOAF has met at various locations throughout Houston over the years, holding potlucks, dances and social outings to museums and zoos, usually during the day

so that women who may not feel comfortable driving at night can attend, according to the "History of LOAF."

The group also organized charity events, provided speakers for LGBTQ+ conferences around the country and hosted women's music concerts, highlighting the music NPR called "by, for and about women (and, more often than not, women who love women)," said Bell. Eversmeyer was a huge fan of that genre, her longtime friend said.

With a membership of about 150 people, LOAF continues to provide a vital source of friendship and community for older lesbians, a population that has historically struggled with isolation, according to Eversmeyer's obituary.

"It was a matter of creating community for people who maybe had not quite experienced it," Bell said. She noted that many older lesbians were not publicly out in the 1980s.

"What happens, especially for a lot of older lesbians, is that their older years can be spent in isolation, so (LOAF aims) to avoid that and keep people healthy and engaged," Bell said.

Eversmeyer also kept the legacies of older lesbians alive through the Old Lesbian Oral Herstory Project, which collects the stories of elderly lesbian women around the country through hundreds of interviews, many of them conducted by Eversmeyer. The project archives are now housed at Smith College in Massachusetts, where new entries continue to be added. Eversmeyer donated personal and organization records to the Texas A&M and University of Houston libraries.

More from Sam González Kelly: Houston's gay soccer club enjoys Qatar World Cup on its own terms

"She has made an enormous impact on LGBTQ+ history across several decades and for some of us, an impact in our lives personally. Over many years, Arden brought people together to preserve, share, and reflect on LGBTQ+ community history, so today we are sharing and reflecting in her memory," wrote Joyce Gabiola, LGBT History Research Collection librarian at the University of Houston.

A Multicultural Gender and Womens Studies scholarship is endowed in Eversmeyer's name at Texas Woman's University, and she has received a host of accolades from local and national organizations. Her work inspired generations of Houston LGBTQ+ activists that followed.

"It seems like in American culture, when you approach your 60s, people think its the final act of your life and its about winding down... and you look at her and its the exact opposite, her activism went into high gear," said Andrew Edmonson, a longtime gay activist in Houston. "Even later in life you can come out and embrace who you are and make change in the world, and she's a huge inspiration on that front."

Eversmeyer is survived by several nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews, according to her obituary.