



## Jean Elizabeth Watson

July 5, 1947 - February 28, 2023

### A Life Well- Lived

Jean Betzner Watson, age 75, passed away peacefully after a long and brave battle with cancer, on Feb 28th, 2023. Her hard-working and generous spirit was evident to all who knew her, and she accomplished so much!

As a young girl, Jean was thrilled to have the opportunity to attend the National Music Camp (Interlochen), as a ballet student, for two consecutive summers. The first year she had a lead in American In Paris, and the second year, in a performance of Midsummer's Night Dream. She took ballet lessons from Rose Marie Floyd throughout her school years.

Graduated from Kimball High School in 1965 and earned a degree in elementary education at Eastern Michigan University. In her senior year, Denver Public Schools were recruiting teachers, and Jean accepted their offer. She left Michigan for Denver with a job and nothing else.

For the next forty-one years she lived in Denver. She taught primary grades while earning a Master's Degree in Special Education from Denver University. Soon after arriving in Denver she met Frank Watson at the apartment complex swimming pool, and they married in 1973. After teaching for eleven years Jean resigned to spend time full-time running an Office Coffee Business with

Frank.

Jean always had a fond memory of Michigan, and after Frank died, she closed the business and returned to Royal Oak, to live and take care of her ninety-six year Dad. They had a wonderful nine months together before he passed.

To get re-acquainted with her new life in RO, Jean joined the Royal Oak Woman's Club and became active in Royal Oak Musicale (ROM).

As young adults, both her Mother and Dad experienced living in the Depression and those qualities of hard work, ambition, and being self-reliant were installed in every day family life. Her Dad was employed at US Rubber Company (then UniRoyal) as a chemical engineer and her Mother was a vocal music teacher and private piano teacher.

Music was a major influence in the Betzner household. While not a musician, her Dad loved classical music. Younger brother Fred pursued the violin and cello, and graduated from the University of MI, a cello performance major. Her brother John, like Dad, also loved classical music and obtained a degree in Electrical Engineering, from U of M.

Coming from a musical family, her Mother was always involved with Community Concerts, South Oakland Symphony Orchestra, and Cranbrook.

The Woman's Club and Royal Oak Musicale were a big influence for Jean. Her Maternal Grandmother, Florence Barrett Brown was a long-time Woman's Club Member, and also the President of Royal Oak Musicale, 1930-1932, listed as Mrs. LaVern Brown in the Directory.

Being influenced and wanting to carry on their legacy, Jean was President of the Woman's club, 2017 - 2019 and President of Royal Oak Musicale for

numerous years.

During a Tea after a ROM Program, Jean happened to sit at the same table as Susan Mutter, the guest French Horn Musician. During the conversation Sue mentioned she also taught piano. Jean was so impressed with Sue's remarks that she handed her program to Sue for her telephone number. As fate would have it, a piano was offered to Jean 3 weeks later, and Jean began a ten years of piano study, with Sue.

In December 2020, Jean was diagnosed with ovarian cancer, and fought a courageous battle for over two years. She was forever grateful for the numerous friends who provided her transportation to weekly treatments. During this time, even though she was ill, she lead the Royal Oak Musicale through covid-time (no easy task) and planned the entire State Convention for the Michigan Federation of Music Clubs, to be held in Ann Arbor in May of this year!

Jean leaves behind loving Brothers, John (Jane) Betzner and Fred (Arlene) Betzner, nieces and nephews Bradford, Jesse, Kimberly, Caroline, and Matthew.

Cousins Ric Brown, Hayden Brown, James Brown, Louise Brown Miracle, Janis Brown Leigh, Mary Brown Taylor, X Brown Price, and Beaton Brown.

In lieu of flowers, donations are welcome to ROWC and ROM.

A memorial service will be held at 2 pm on Sunday, September 17, 2023 at the Royal Oak Woman's Club, 404 S. Pleasant St., Royal Oak 48067. Share your memories at [www.SullivanFuneralDirectors.com](http://www.SullivanFuneralDirectors.com).

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

SEP 17. 2:00 PM (ET)

Royal Oak Woman's Club  
404 S. Pleasant Street  
Royal Oak, MI 48067

# Tribute Wall

CS

“ I was blessed to know Jean through Sue Mutter because we both took piano lessons from her and would get together as “adult piano students”. She was such a dear and was always so encouraging to me, especially at recitals! I loved her smile and her piano pieces she would play at recitals. What a dear lady she was! I will always think of her at piano recitals and try to be that kind, encouraging presence that she always was.



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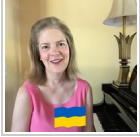
**Chris Schultz** - March 06, 2023 at 09:24 AM

BO

“ Oh, how I loved Jean! When she was in the room, her light shone. I always appreciated her encouraging words of the "Joy to You!" concerts and other community events I was part of..... Seeing her beaming face in the audience, and receiving her supportive words were elements of the events I always looked forward to.....Oh, I will miss her. Thankful for her example of service, kindness and community/charitable contributions. Beautiful, inspiring person. ❤️

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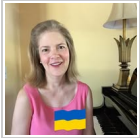
**Barbara Ogar** - March 05, 2023 at 10:57 PM



“ Jean was one of the best friends I ever had! She gave 100% to any task, at hand, and was ALWAYS thinking about how she could help others! Through her volunteer work at Royal Oak Musicale, she awarded music scholarships to so many deserving young people, over the years, and put on tremendous monthly concerts, for the enjoyment of the community! She was my piano student for about 10 years, and was one of the most dedicated of all, preparing each lesson with such care! She made great progress! But, more than that, she was a friend, and helped me in so many ways: at recital receptions, sitting and reading to my mother, who had dementia, and if there was an event, you can bet it would be Jean doing the dishes afterward...a true servant heart, that is so rare! She was an inspiration to us all!

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**Susan Mutter** - March 05, 2023 at 09:45 PM



“ 15 files added to the album Jean and Friends!



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**Susan Mutter** - March 05, 2023 at 09:38 PM

FB

*We were so lucky to have known Jean through the Farmington Musicale. She came to install our new board members many times and stayed for the luncheon and concert of the day. What outstanding work and organization she gave to the SE District and MFMC members. As a friend with a smile, Jean was always ready to lend a helping hand, was kind, dignified and made you think you were number one, while all the time was Her. Our thoughts are with the family.*

*Fern Barber - March 20 - 10:12 AM*

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**Fern Barber** - March 20, 2023 at 10:13 AM