

This Obituary was provided by Bob Wagner, Lois's son.

Lois Rae Carlson passed away in Chicago, USA on April 1 2017, aged 66.

Born in Minnesota, Lois moved to Canberra with her family in the late 1960s for her father's posting as Defence Attaché for the United States Air Force – a significant role given Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War at that time. Both she and her brother Rollie attended Telopea Park High School.

When Lois returned to the US she eventually settled in Wisconsin with her husband Donald Spies. After his death in 1990 she moved to Chicago, first of all the northern suburbs and later downtown. She married Michael Lem in 2005.

Lois was a Christian Science practitioner for more than 40 years. She worked in her own practice, helping individuals who sought spiritual healing as well as teaching and lecturing all over the United States.

She wrote extensively on spiritual topics, including many articles for the Christian Science Monitor newspaper. She touched many, many lives and while her sudden passing has been cause of enormous grief and sadness it has also brought much testament to and thankfulness for her great and many kindnesses, wisdom, love of people and love of God.

Lois knew no other way to approach life other than with great passion for all that she did. Half-heartedness was foreign to her; enthusiasm and gladness are words that will always be easily associated with her. Grateful for the smallest of life's blessings, she epitomised the word 'thankfulness'.

Lois loved living in Chicago. For all of the delight of her travels she was happiest at home with Michael enjoying the vibrancy of the city, the diversity of people, the music (jazz and the symphony in particular), and the beauty of the lake surrounds.

Just a week before she died Lois was in California, where she gave what was to be her final lecture, her definitive address that had been given many times across the country: 'The healing power of unselfishness'. The title could not have been more appropriate as part of her epitaph; her life was one punctuated with personal testimony of what she was teaching. Colloquially, she 'walked the talk'.

Upon her return to Chicago Lois fell suddenly and unexpectedly ill and passed away peacefully a few days later.

She is survived by her husband Michael, brothers Steve and Rollie, sons Bob, Soren and Skander and four grandchildren.

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Lois wrote to Brett Yeats on 13 October 2011

Dear fellow Telopeans,

When I first heard about the reunion, I wanted to write you all an apology. My memory of my high school years with you is so dim because of the cloudy lens of my own self-absorption.

It is a reassurance that the intensity of life experience moves us irresistibly beyond ourselves. We discover that not only can we be of service to others, but that is actually what we are designed to do.

May the reunion give each of you the opportunity to appreciate each other's clearshining. May you find ever new opportunities to share your goodness with others.

Only the best, Lois Carlson