

Joan R’Lou Ballard Larson was born on July 8, 1929, in Alexandria, Minnesota to Wallace and Alfa (Wicken) Ballard. She graduated from Alexandria High School in 1947. On August 17, 1947, Joan was united in marriage to Myron Larson. The couple lived in several locations in the U.S. with his career in the Minnesota Forest Service and U.S Border Patrol. The couple lived in Hibbing where their children, Deyanne and Craig were born. She put her education on hold while she stayed home with their two children. No matter where the family lived, Joan always visited the library. When the family lived in Montana, Joan worked as the Branch Librarian in Browning, MT. While in Maine, Joan earned a bachelor’s degree and eventually a master’s degree in library science at the University of Maine, where she accepted an assistant librarian position at the university.

After Myron’s retirement, the couple moved back to Alexandria where they built a log home on Lake Ida in the spot where they had enjoyed a cabin for many years. In 1983, Joan accepted her final most beloved job working as the director of the Northern Lights Library Network. Joan loved her job and didn’t retire until the age of 72.

Joan was very active and served on the board of the Douglas County Friends of the Library, past-president of the Minnesota Library Association, American Library Association, Minnesota Educational Media Organization, board of directors for the Minnesota Association for Library Friends for 10 years, and a local branch of the American Association of University Women. Joan was recognized for her many accomplishment and dedication by being awarded the President’s Award and the Distinguished Achievement Award from the Minnesota Library Association, Distinguished Service Award from the Minnesota Educational Media Organization, and the Library Friend of the Year from the Minnesota Association of Library Friends. Along with working Joan also had a passion for playing bridge, enjoyed bowling, and spending time at their home on Lake Ida. Joan was an advocate of honesty and that you are the product of the choices you make.

Joan died on Saturday, February 23, 2019, at Diamond Willow in Alexandria at the age of 89. She is survived by her son, Craig (Laurine “Sam”) Larson of Alexandria; son-in-law, Edward Valencia of Tucson, AZ; six grandchildren, Kristin Stevens, Erika Stevens both of Tucson, AZ, Laurel Loew of Tubac, AZ, Jennifer Rosato of Duluth, MN, Matthew Larson and Kari Larson of Alexandria; 12 great-grandchildren, Desarae, Jesse, Corrado, Sophia R., Lily, Rachel, Benjamin, Nathan, Meghan, Sophia Z., Jennifer, and Tina; great-great-grandchildren, Aiden, Logan, Payton, Lonnyx, and Cassius; special friends, Romyne Strand and Merrick Stevens. Joan is preceded in death by her parents, Wallace and Alfa; husband, Myron; daughter, Deyanne Valencia; and brother, Judge Paul Ballard.

Memorials are preferred to the Douglas County Historical Society or the Douglas County Friends of the Library.

*He stilled the storm*

*to a whisper.*

*The waves of the sea*

*were hushed.*

*They were glad*

*when it grew calm,*

*and He guided them*

*to their*

*haven of rest.*

*Psalm 107:29-30*

*“The World Belongs  
To Those Who Read.”*

*Rick Holland*

*In Memory of*

**Joan R’Lou Ballard Larson**

July 8, 1929 † February 23, 2019

**Funeral Service**

Anderson Funeral Home  
Alexandria, Minnesota

Thursday, February 28, 2019  
11:00 AM

**Officiant**

Reverend Scott Keehn

**Musician**

Kim Byrne

**Music**

*His Eye Is On The Sparrow  
In The Garden*

**Casket Bearers**

Kristin Stevens	Erika Stevens
Laurel Loew	Jennifer Rosato
Matthew Larson	Kari Larson

**Interment**

Kinkead Cemetery  
Alexandria, Minnesota