



## Jean Swengel Beardsley Allen

September 25, 1923 - November 15, 2024

Jean Swengel Beardsley Allen, born September 25, 1923, died peacefully in the presence of her daughter and son in St. Augustine, Florida on November 15, 2024.

Jean was born on September 25, 1923, a lovely autumn day, in Paintsville, Kentucky. She was delivered by her father D.H. Swengel, M.D. He and her mother, Edith Milnor, were very proud of their daughters, Jean and Mary.

Jean met her future husband William “Bill” Beardsley when she was in the 5th grade, and Bill helped her family move into their house in Beaverton, Michigan. In 1941, Jean followed Bill to Michigan State University (MSU).

In 1945, Jean earned a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Home Economics with a minor in Vocal Music from Michigan State University. She was a member of the Chi Omega Sorority and later held a leadership position on the Alumni Panhellenic Council at MSU.

After World War II, in which Bill served in the US Army in the Pacific, Bill and Jean were married in March of 1947.

After several moves, their then-family of six settled back in East Lansing, Michigan, the community and home in which she and Bill raised all four of

their children: daughter, Paula, and three sons, Douglas, Scott, and Richard (“Dick”).

In 1972, Jean earned a Master of Arts (M.A.) degree in Speech and Communications, also from MSU. During that time while raising their children, Jean was a teacher of Family and Consumer Sciences. Bill served for 20 years in MSU’s athletic department, at which their children spent many days on the MSU campus, working MSU athletics and in student services. Their life in East Lansing was a coming home for the two of them and she felt the family was blessed. Bill passed suddenly at the age of 59 in 1980, completing his morning jog on the inside track at MSU’s Jenison Fieldhouse.

Four years later, Jean met William “Bill” Allen on a cruise through the Bahamas. Bill, born in Philadelphia and a World War II Air Force Veteran, and Jean were married in 1984. They enjoyed 33 years together, enjoying Mackinac Island, Michigan in the summers and Sarasota, Florida in the winter. The two of them were seen frequenting at community and social events, especially during the summer months on Mackinac Island. Bill preceded Jean in death at the age of 94 in 2017.

Two sons, Doug and Scott also preceded Jean in death. Scott, an attorney at law, passed in 1986 at the age of 32, and Doug, the founder of the Mackinac Island Butterfly House, passed in 1997 at the age of 45. Jean's sister, Mary Swengel Garcia, born in 1925, preceded Jean in death, as did many family members who dearly impacted her life.

Jean sustained her active life in Sarasota and on Mackinac Island, often sharing with others that these changes in environment and cultures were instrumental for her longevity. She exercised in the fresh air, ate healthily, focused on her faith, wrote several memoirs, and cherished the companionship of others. Her homes, coupled with the love of family and

friends brought her great joy. She always wore a smile on her face.

Jean volunteered and extended support to the arts, the schools, the elderly, and her church. Jean was very devoted to the Seventh Day Adventist Church in Sarasota and on Mackinac Island. She was an active member of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) where she held many leadership positions. She was a member of the Sarasota Fine Arts Association, the Sarasota Opera Guild, the Mackinac Island Arts Association, the Methodist Women's Group (now known as United Women in Faith), the MSU Ralph Young Scholarship Association, the MSU Human Ecology Association, the MSU Alumni Association, and many other service organizations on Mackinac Island and in Sarasota. For many years she played bridge on Mackinac Island as a very wise and strategic bridge player!

Jean was an accomplished seamstress and tailor. She loved decorating her home with draperies, upholstery, and pillows she made herself. Do-it-herself projects filled (and fulfilled) her life. She could turn a yard of fabric, or even an imperfect outfit into the most beautiful ensemble or accessory. She often spoke to groups about being resourceful with what she had; that, too, was one of her greatest passions. She played the piano, the organ, and was an accomplished soprano singer, she sang in several operas at MSU.

Jean is survived by her daughter, Paula Steele; her youngest son, Richard Beardsley ("Dick"); nine grandchildren; and eight great grandchildren (ages 1 – 49).

The family is blessed and grateful that their wonderful matriarch was able to live an exceptionally healthy and happy 101 years with them on this earth. She will be dearly missed.

Jean's family wishes to announce that a graveside service will be held on Friday, November 29th, 2024, at 10:30 AM at the Protestant Cemetery on Mackinac Island. All are welcome to attend as Jean's family lays her to rest in this beautiful and peaceful location on what Jean called her "mystical" island.

Jean's family will welcome more friends and family to a celebration of life in her memory in the summer of 2025, also on Mackinac Island. More information will be forthcoming.

In lieu of flowers, if desired, the family requests that donations be made to the Mackinac Island Arts Association. Donations, in remembrance of Jean Swengel Beardsley Allen, can be made online at <https://www.mackinacartscouncil.org/>

Obituary as submitted by family

# Cemetery Details

## Mackinac Island Protestant Cemetery

Mackinac Island, MI 49757

# Previous Events

## Graveside Service

NOV **29**. 10:30 AM (ET)

Mackinac Island Protestant Cemetery  
Mackinac Island, MI 49757

# Tribute Wall

LC

“ Jean was a dear friend of ours whom we met at the SDA church in Sarasota, FL. We visited her several times in her homes in Sarasota and Macinac Island. We were so sorry to find that she passed in November of 2024. We had corresponded with her during her last year. Jean was a very talented lady, and we enjoyed her company and friendship so very much. (Robert & Linda Carr, Surprise, AZ).

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**Linda M Carr** - July 17, 2025 at 02:17 PM