



Georgia N Waterman

September 13, 1927 - October 4, 2025

Georgia Waterman died October 4th in the company of her daughter Candace, who had been by her side throughout her illness; her son-in-law Jim; and her grandson Jason. Missing her by moments were her granddaughter Caitlin and great-granddaughter Teagan, who was hassling her mom all morning to get a move on it, as well as her grandson Chris and his wife Jordan. Georgia had a good last month on this earth. She celebrated her 98th birthday with her great-grandchildren, as well as Chris's wedding with a slice of cake delivered expressly to her. After many years apart, she joins her late husband Bert Lee Waterman, Jr. She no doubt immediately let him know how she really feels about him leaving her all those years ago.

Born in Omaha, Nebraska in 1927, Georgia was a child of the Dust Bowl. She was raised by her mom, Gladys, and Seba Skinner, her step-father. They lived in what her son Randy described as "a one room concrete house," what her youngest sister Jo says was the garage behind their grandparents' place. But Georgia was luckier than Bert. "They had more food to eat because their grandparents had a garden," is what she always told Candace.

At Omaha Technical High School, Georgia met the love of her life. Bert was a state wrestling champion his senior year ('44), and apparently this was enough for her because they got hitched when they were still kids. A cheerleader, she looked like a real flirt in her senior photo. In 1946, he

returned from the Pacific Theater, and they had Randy.

The G.I. Bill brought them north to Michigan State, where the family settled in, Randy recalls, a village of trailers the university put up for veterans. Georgia would certainly not let us get away without mentioning that Bert wrestled his way to a second place finish at the National AAU wrestling championships in 1948. In those early years, Jo says that her sister and brother-in-law would fetch her from Nebraska “until they got tired of” her. Georgia and Bert were quite protective of her younger sisters, especially Jeannine. “I think she was helping to hold the family together because it was her mom doing that, and then her fathers weren’t there,” her son Craig says. Her childhood gave her a fondness for underdogs and rascals.

After graduating, Bert taught social studies and civics and started the wrestling program at Ypsilanti High School. There, Georgia developed her reputation as a passionate supporter of his squads. “She was just devoted. I can’t imagine she ever missed a meet,” Randy says. C. Tino Lambros, one of his wrestlers, says they were like family. A very young Candace remembers hanging in the living room with the grapplers, and Georgia telling her about the Gillum twins camping out on the lawn. That devotion continued at Yale, where Bert got a “life changing” coaching job. After a stint in Guilford, they bought the house in Bethany that she treasured. In Connecticut, they would have members of the team over every year for Thanksgiving. One of Bert’s college wrestlers, Jim Bennett, believes Georgia’s support wasn’t just enthusiasm for the sport. “I get the sense that if Bert had been the swim coach, she would have been the same way,” he says. Craig adds, “I think that she was into wrestling to the nth degree because she knew that it saved him.” (After Bert died at their Bethany home in 1999, she held on to the place like ivy.)

About Georgia, former Yale wrestler Jack Moses says, “I always told your

grandfather, you're punching way above your weight." Among family, she was known for holding on to maybe too many things — those broken records?? — but this has afforded us so much evidence of their lives. "After I graduated in 1979, I wrote a letter to your grandfather," Jack says. "When he died, I found out he kept that letter and your grandmother gave it to me."

Till the end of her days, she maintained an unforgiving grudge against Yale for cutting the varsity program in 1991. This was just one of her many passions. Blessed with a ferocious sweet tooth, her other great loves were Tootsie Rolls and jelly beans. She read a few books a week and was particularly into Stephen King, even though it gave her a terrific fear of clowns. She shared Solitaire with her grandkids and hosted a bridge night with the neighbors. She was an avid tennis player into her 70s, her son-in-law Jim recalls; a partisan for Michigan State football; and a passionate observer of golf. Especially Phil Mickelson.

Caitlin remembers the excitement of hot chocolate at Teddy B's. All of us know she had a real thing for gardening. Her grandsons Jason and Matt remember picking berries with her. So does her granddaughter Taffy. Georgia was aghast when Chris, then very young, told her he didn't like tomatoes, and decided then and there they'd grow some together. (One explanation: "You know, Papa always loved a white bread tomato sandwich," Candace says.) In any case, Georgia proved Chris wrong. In typical Midwest fashion, she never said a lick. She was blessed with a green thumb but out of deference to her memory we won't talk about the cooking, especially the bone soup she made Bert. We will say that she had a talent for baking, especially chocolate chip cookies, and started the important family tradition of holiday fudge.

She was not a big drinker but she sure did enjoy a margarita, as her granddaughters Taryn and Brenna can tell you. They would tease her about

getting drunk on frozen margaritas whenever presented with the chance and Georgia had one word for them: "shush!" Followed, of course, by an eye-roll or grin. When asked about the margarita story, Taryn said, "Which margarita story are you referring to? There were quite a few with our margarita drinking Nana." Shush!

Among other things, Georgia imbued at least a few of us with a profound stubbornness. Craig would like to correct the record and say it was all of us. Craig and Candace say that their mom was the queen of stubbornness. We all know that she innovated the form. This is at least in part why some of us have persisted in our dim-witted pursuits of "creative" jobs. Starting in 2013, she posed for portraits taken by her grandson Jason. She'd bashfully tell him not to waste film, only to start hamming it up. As was her style. After her Alzheimer's diagnosis in 2019, she agreed to star in a series of photos, encouraging him to continue the work.

As much as she adored her grandchildren, she was just as obsessed with her great-grandchildren. They might as well have been glued to her. She remained so enamored on her last birthday, lighting up when she saw her great-grandsons Connor and Nolan.

When she'd visit as a kid, Taffy says they'd make welcome baskets for new neighbors like Mary Ann Booss, who became Georgia's longtime friend. When Mary Ann moved to Knollwood Road in 1975, Georgia took her "under her wing" and showed her where to shop for groceries. After her diagnosis, she would check on Georgia almost daily, making her breakfast and bailing her out during snowstorms. We would like to thank her for her spirit of reciprocity and helping Candace through difficult decisions.

In her final years, Georgia received great care and love from Kerline, Pacifico, Janette, Yolanda, Jackie, Shadajsa, Katie, and others at Charter Senior Living

in Woodbridge. We would like to express our gratitude to them for treating her like their own and affording her some dignity.

Georgia Waterman was predeceased by family including her husband, Bert Lee Waterman; mother Gladys Skinner; sisters Jeanine Pickens and Jacqueline Allen; and brother Gene Skinner. She is survived by her son Craig (Marty Shutzberg) Waterman, HI; daughter Candace (Jim) Crowley, CT; son Randy (Debbie) Waterman, TX; and Kim Schutz-Waterman, AZ; grandchildren Colton, Brenna, and Taryn Waterman; Matt Crowley, Caitlin (Tim) Wilson, Jason Crowley, and Chris (Jordan Larson) Crowley; Todd Waterman and Taffy (Bob) Bright; Tamara Wood, Angela Nicholson, and Christina Tower; great-grandchildren Connor, Nolan, and Teagan Wilson; Bella, Josie, and Novell Bright; Blake and Emily Wood; Luke and Jake Rackauckas; siblings Joan (John) Goodman and Jim (Mary) Skinner; and several nieces and nephews.

The family will be having a gathering to celebrate Georgia's life at a future date.

If anyone wishes to do something in Georgia's memory, a donation to the Alzheimer's Association would be appreciated.

Tribute Wall

HH

“ Dear Waterman family, it is with sadness that I heard about the death of Georgia last month. She was the sweetest adult in my life for my four years at Yale as an undergrad and those two years as Bert Waterman's grad assistant on the wrestling team. Seeing the family in Guilford those wrestling seasons were a source of respite and comfort to all of us on the team. We always gave Craig a hard time and many wrestlers wooed Candace to come around more often. Georgia made her house was our home away from home. Our family has all of you in our prayers. May your mom be watching over us now and for the years to come.
-- Henry Hooper

Henry Hooper - November 06, 2025 at 01:56 PM

CW

Thank you, Henry!!!

Craig A Waterman - December 03, 2025 at 08:45 PM

MS

“ My fondest memories of Georgia was her hosting Thanksgiving dinner for the wrestling team. Bert scheduled wrestling matches for the Saturday after Thanksgiving so the wrestlers had to stay in town and couldn't eat. Georgia would make thanksgiving dinners after the Saturday matches. It was a massive undertaking, serving a whole team of wrestlers who had been starving themselves. It really made the holiday. My deepest sympathies to the family.

Marty Schwartz 1976

Marty J. Schwartz - November 02, 2025 at 09:05 AM

CW

Thank you, Marty!!

Craig A Waterman - December 03, 2025 at 08:47 PM

BM

“*Francois and I have such good memories of our friend and neighbor Georgia as well as her family, especially Bert, Candace and Craig, when we lived in Guilford. We would often find ourselves at their home across the street, sharing news and updates of our lives. She and the whole family meant a lot to us and still do, despite the years that have passed. We send our sympathy and love to all of you from Columbus, Ohio, where we now live.*

Beth and Francois Mollard - October 15, 2025 at 11:38 AM

CW

Thank you, Francois and Beth!! All the best and Mahalo from Hawaii!!

Craig A Waterman - December 03, 2025 at 08:49 PM



“*The entire Morgan family sends their deepest sympathy to Georgia Waterman's children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. Richard and Elliott's mom, also named Georgia (!), remember her namesake, Georgia, when she greeted her every morning at the JCC for many years. And she remembers visiting "Nana" at her lovely home in Bethany while dropping off her grand sons, Chris and Jason, who were close friends of the Morgan brothers, especially. Elliott. Sending love and deepest sympathy as Nana will always be remembered.*

Georgia Chavent - October 14, 2025 at 11:36 AM

CD

“ So sorry to hear of the passing of your mother. She and your Dad were always so kind to me during my time on the wrestling team at Yale. I think of both of them often. Those were special times. Glad that Jack Moses had an opportunity to visit with Mrs. Waterman before she passed away. My thoughts and prayers are with the whole family. All my best, Craig Davis '78

Craig Davis - October 13, 2025 at 10:06 PM

CW

Thank you, Craig!!

Craig A Waterman - December 03, 2025 at 08:50 PM