



## Linda Porten

November 6, 1940 - August 30, 2024

Linda lived a good life and excelled in her various roles of Wife, Mother, Relative, Friend, and Acquaintance for decades. Husband Ronald E. Porten loves her dearly and misses her presence greatly, Daughters Leah Marie Grossman, and Elizabeth Ann Nicholls love her dearly and miss her presence greatly as well. Most of our relatives and friends from the 1950's & sixties are in the western states of North Dakota and Colorado with whom we like to exchange phone calls, Christmas Letters, and occasional visits that sometimes come to pass.

She grew up in Rhame North Dakota, her mother taught in the local school and her Father owned the hardware & equipment business.

She first met her future husband, me (Ron) when I started my North Dakota State University education in Fargo in Eastern North Dakota on the West side of the Red River and she was enrolled in Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota located on the East side of the Red River. Although we both grew up in Western North Dakota, me on a Farm and she in Rhame, North Dakota, forty miles apart, we never met until she needed a 400-mile ride home for the Thanksgiving Holiday during our first year in College. A mutual friend heard she was looking for a ride home and told her he knew a guy with a car who would probably be going home and would contact him and see if he had space left for another passenger, and reported back that, yes, I had room,

gave me the address, and I went across the river to arrange departure and return timing for the trip. So, we met and the summer after she graduated with a degree in Chemistry and Biology with a Certificate as a Registered Medical Technologist, we were married on June 8th, 1962. I had signed up for advanced ROTC to earn commissioning as a second lieutenant in the Air Force and had to report to Wichita Falls Air Base in Texas for a required school to learn the specifics of performing as a "Management Analysis" officer at any Air Force Base in the world.

I had never been to an Air Force School and didn't know what kind of a situation to expect for a married couple. So, Linda stayed with her parents in Rhame and worked as a Medical Technologist in a relatively nearby hospital while I found and rented a furnished cottage where we would live. Thankfully, my parents drove Linda to Texas so we could be together, and they all had an enjoyable time doing it. May such blessings never cease.

The school had some social events that a spouse could attend and that worked out nicely. Eventually, the school session was completed, and I was reassigned to Amarillo Air Force Base in Texas, not that far away and we made the move to a mostly furnished house in a section of town where old Route 66 meandered through the city. Linda found a Medical Technology job in a local doctor's office and sent her income to her parents to help them pay for her younger brother's college expenses.

After about a year in Amarillo, the Air force reassigned us to Guam where the Air Base was being upgraded to begin the bombing of North Vietnam with B-52 bombers newly modified for that task.

Linda was excited about the trip. We were told we would be assigned a furnished house when got there so store whatever you have here except to pack your clothes and few personal items you need to take along when you go. We had enough time to report into the Guam Air Force Base, that we

could drive from Amarillo to North Dakota to visit a while with both sets of parents, then through Miles City, Montana to visit my oldest brother Russ Porten and his wife Chery, and then across the far western states to get to San Francisco to catch a four-engine propeller driven airplane that took us to Hawaii, then to Wake Island, and finally to the Guam airbase. The landing at Wake Island was a little nerve-racking because the airplane was slowing down and going lower for a landing, but all we could see out the window was water getting closer until we thumped down on a solid runway and began to see some of it through the window. Whew! Wake Island is relatively small with a lake in the middle of the now cold volcano that was the island. The breakfast we had there was special, it's the only time in my life that I was ever served toast that was both burned and soggy.

After a 30-hour flight from San Francisco, we landed in the Guam Airport between 2:00 & 3:00 AM and were met there by sponsors from my new office who took us to our new house on Guam which they had outfitted with welcoming gifts such as tasty foods of various types, tame liquid refreshments, and welcoming conversations, and then mercifully, let us go to bed. We were given a day or two to get unpacked and rested up a bit before the office carpool came by to take me to the office to officially check in.

After a few days of getting settled in the house, Linda inquired about any openings for a medical technologist at the Hospital of Guam and the answer was a resounding "YES, YES, YES! Come on down, let's talk. There was a problem because the car we shipped from San Francisco wasn't scheduled to arrive for nearly a month. Fortunately, a nearby neighbor stopped by to tell us he was shipping out and had a Vauxhall car to sell and an Air Conditioner that would fit in our house because it was just like his house. We bought both, installed the air conditioner and covered up the around-the-house ventilation openings with transparent plastic sheeting that then cooled the house nicely,

and Linda drove the Vauxhall down to Guam Memorial Hospital and was hired on the spot and couldn't stop smiling when she got home. We would occasionally go to the nearby Officers Club for dinner where we met other young military couples including Russ and Marie Collier who became life-long friends both on Guam and afterward when we met up again when both couples returned to the USA and were assigned to Washington a few months apart.

Guam is a small island, 4 to 8 miles wide and about thirty miles long and we could drive around the island casually seeing everything in a couple of hours. Not surprisingly, people developed what we called "Rock Fever", a longing to get off the Island once in a while to experience something different. To deal with this malady and help people maintain a positive outlook, the Air Force sponsored two flights a year off the island to either Hong Kong or Tokyo, so people had relief from "Rock Fever" for a couple of weeks each year.

During our two-year assignment to Guam, we went to Tokyo once and Hong Kong twice and Linda enjoyed those trips very much. We missed a second trip to Tokyo because the tempo of the Vietnamese War created situations that required me to remain on duty. Linda really enjoyed those trips and so did I. In Tokyo we stayed with a Japanese family that rented out a spare room with a Japanese bath for visitors. They shared food and treats with us when we were there. During the day we would explore the various parts of the city that were relatively close by.

Our two trips to Hong Kong were both especially interesting to Linda because it was a British-oriented protectorate and conversations in the lavish commercial stores were much less complicated and the taxi cabs were plentiful. It was then a shopping paradise for just about everything, but she was particularly interested in the tailor shops where you could have just about any clothing made and she especially liked getting suits made and so did I, for

that matter. The hotel we stayed in while in Hong Kong was a skyscraper and we asked for our rooms to be in the upper levels of that hotel where the windows presented a Vista including part of the city, the harbor, the bay including Victoria Island and its tall hotel where visitors could have dinner and watch entertainers perform at the same time.

Back on Guam, Linda loved doing her hospital work during the week and going about the Island on Weekends trying the local restaurants, mingling with the always friendly Guamanians, and searching the beaches and the nearby reefs for the seashells which were then cleaned and put on display at home.

When our two-year assignment was nearing completion, and we had a departure date, Russ and Marie stopped by to talk about where we and they might end up next. Russ commented, “ the way these things usually work out is as follows: We are from Virginia, and you are from North Dakota. You will probably go to Virginia, and we’ll go to North Dakota. And oddly enough, Russ & Marie were assigned to air bases in North Dakota. And, with a stopover in Texas for another Air force arranged school session, this time at Texas A&M, Linda and I were reassigned to the Pentagon and lived in Virginia.

At the end of the school session, eldest daughter Leah Marie Porten, was born at 5:00 AM on August 15th, 1967, on the same day Ron had his oral examination for graduation at 10:00 AM. We rested there part of the 30 day deadline to get to the Pentagon until we felt up to outfitting the car with a portable baby bed along with everything else needed for her and for us to drive to North Dakota to show her to the brand-new grandparents, rest up some more, and still have time to drive to Virginia to begin the Pentagon Assignment.

Soon after arrival, We became members of the Peace Lutheran Church and helped out there when we could. I helped keep the grass mowed some of the

time and other like tasks, but Linda was deeply involved with many of the church's activities, especially those that needed creative thinking or artistic skill for special events, for example, being in charge of the Scandinavian Cookie Festival Table at Christmas.

In 1970, another Daughter, Elizabeth Ann Porten, was born on August 26th and we soon moved from our apartment to a new townhouse we bought to make the expanding family more comfortable with enough bedrooms in three full levels including a basement that could be finished for some extra room for family activities.

In the late seventies, we moved again to a larger house we bought in a new development where we had much more indoor living space and outdoor activity space for the entire family to use more comfortably. Nearly all of the interior decorating plans for these houses were formulated, scheduled, implemented, and approved by Linda with help from contractors and Ron, Leah, and Beth.

Eventually, Russ and Marie were assigned to the Washington Region and bought a house in the same development we were in at that time, just a block or two away from our house.

We were delighted to be able to live in the same area again. Marie, also an artist, found a job working for the director of the Art League School located in Alexandria, Virginia. Later on, the director began looking for an assistant director and Linda applied for the job in 1990 and got it. She had been painting with watercolors for much of her life, and the art league school relit the original fire and she spent a fair amount of her spare time practicing and perfecting the skills she already had.

In 1998, we bought a second house in a beautiful place in the Northern neck of Virginia that was large enough to live in when desired and that also had the space needed for Linda's Art Studio. We then outfitted it for that purpose. Linda was delighted with the studio and the large grass yard with big and small trees, nice bushes, and Jackson Creek located at the edge of our backyard that emptied into the Potomac river perhaps a mile away.

Hank and Lene Lavery were and still are our next-door neighbors there and are the best neighbors anyone could wish to have there or anywhere else. Hank is President of the Millennium Pool Company, located in this area where they lived for many years until they also began to yearn for a beautiful, quiet place to escape to periodically from the hustle and bustle of the Washington area and fortunately settled next door to our place and THANK GOD, have been watching over it since we arrived here and let us know how things are going at our place. Linda and I traveled out there most weekends for years while I was still at work every week and, on occasion, she would spend the interim weekdays there painting full time. Linda was by then offering her work for exhibition in art shows as both daughters were then nearly independent. It was customary to supply a summary of the artist's accomplishments prior to the current exhibition. What follows is one written by her and attached to the paintings that were presented and exhibited all over the area.

-----  
ABOUT THE ARTIST

I grew up in a land of big skies and rolling prairies in North Dakota where fields of wheat wave gently on breezy summer afternoons. The tranquility of this vast open multi-hued landscape lingers in my mind as I explore the subtleties of light and color in my paintings.

My love of watercolors began when I first saw the way Watercolors sparkle when placed on the paper and seem almost alive as they flow together or

stand stiffly apart, each intent on making its own statement. I am aware that each painting records one moment in time - a scene that was not the same a moment ago and will not be the same a moment from now. Edward Hopper captured life's defining moments in his art and I strive to incorporate them in mine as well.

I have studied, exhibited, and won awards for my art in North Dakota, Texas, and Virginia. But my art matured most while working with scores of artists during the years I was Assistant Director of the Art League School in Alexandria VA.

I have shown works at a Vale Arts Show, The Springfield Art Guild gallery, Green Spring Gardens Park, George Washington's River Farm – the American Horticultural Center, Northern Virginia Community College, the Art Gallery in Alexandria Virginia, and the American Federation of American Societies of Experimental Biology.

I have work in private collections in the United States, Guam, England, Saudi Arabia, Greece, and Peru. EC May Fine Art in Alexandria, Va., Water and Queen Studio, Tappahannock, Va. and Teddy's Village Gallery in Medora, ND currently represent me. I am a member of Springfield Art Guild and the Art League, Alexandria, Va.

-----

All who knew her in her various roles of Wife, Mother, Relative, Friend, and Acquaintance will miss her smiling face and happy personality.

Husband Ronald E. Porten loves her dearly and misses her presence greatly, Daughters Leah Marie Grossman, and Elizabeth Ann Nicholls love her dearly and miss her presence greatly as well.

Linda was an excellent Mother to Leah and Beth at each stage as they grew to adulthood. She made Halloween costumes for them as youngsters. Helped them understand puzzling aspects of their schoolwork and boyfriends, select a college, plan weddings, and to her last days was a good friend and confident.

Linda loved being grandmother to Leah's sons, Zach and Aaron, and Beth's child, Cricket as they each arrived in our family. The boys both loved fireworks so many Fourth of July Holidays were Fireworks Celebrations at our house. Cricket loves to sew clothes and Grandmother helped Beth and Cricket understand the intricacies of sewing patterns since Linda sewed a great deal herself throughout her lifetime.

Linda was an exceptional wife, I was always comfortable being with her from day one, loved her for who she was, and married her to keep her close. She was a wonderful companion in the good times and a stalwart companion in helping deal with the challenging times the outside world can provide for residents.

# Tribute Wall

AC

“ I am very fortunate to have known Linda. (Her daughter Beth was my college bestie at JMU and still one of my closest and dearest friends.) I treasure the fond memories of spending time at Linda and Ron's beautiful home in Lorton, her hospitality, her frank sense of humor, and especially her welcoming and fun personality that made everyone feel accepted and included. And I will always remember her yummy coffee she served in some of her beautiful china cups! (The first time I ever had flavored coffee was at her house and as a result, I am now and forever a huge consumer of vanilla coffee!). I am also very grateful for the amazing bridal shower that Linda and Beth gave me in 1995, featuring beautiful art, flowers, and homemade food (I really need to get the recipe for that beef noodle dish...I still recall how delicious it was!). I am also the lucky recipient of one of Linda's gorgeous paintings; it's one of the few pieces of original artwork that I preserved when I recently purged, organized and downsized much of my possessions. (It occupied a prominent place above my living room couch and will hopefully have a new life in my retirement home one day.:) Linda, we are sad to lose you but I know you are resting in peace and I truly hope we will meet again one day. You have left a great legacy and many wonderful memories. I send much love to the Porten, Nicholls and Grossman families now and forever!

---

**Anna Colton** - October 17, 2024 at 09:29 AM

JW

“ A truly special person will be greatly missed but not forgotten. My most frequent memory of Linda was finding her on the back porch enjoying the day. I would stop and chat with her awhile and catch up with our busy lives, always leaving with a smile. My fondest memory of Linda, and Ron, is when they attended my mother's funeral. I was in disbelief when I saw them walking up the ramp, with her cane in hand, but they knew the importance of supporting a neighbor, a lesson I will never forget. I am so glad I was privileged to know Linda. May you rest in peace.

---

**Jerry Williams** - October 14, 2024 at 01:29 PM

MW

“ Ron and Linda were wonderful next door neighbors to us in Raceway Farms. We got to know them better over the years and always enjoyed their fun stories and shared good laughs. Our kids always had to visit their house first on Halloween night to show off their costumes. They always welcomed us in and helped us anytime we needed it. Linda's artwork was exceptionally beautiful and I have one of her designs on a card that I uploaded here for all to see and admire. Once I shared a sorrow with Linda and she gave me some life-advice that I often recall and truly appreciate. This world lost a beautiful soul and Heaven gained a lovely lady. May she rest in eternal peace.



---

**Mary Beth Williams** - October 10, 2024 at 09:08 PM

RP

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



---

Ronald E. Porten - September 27, 2024 at 02:43 PM

RP

“ *"Such sadness to know that my best friend of 60 years has passed away. She was more than a friend, more like a beloved sister. She was exceptionally intelligent, always with a book nearby, always absorbing new information.*

*She was also a master watercolor artist. I proudly display a spectacular white iris painting as well as one of blue morning glories. They are a reminder every day of my beautiful friend of many years. I will miss her every day of my life."*

*Marie Collier - Blacksburg, VA*

---

Ronald E. Porten - September 27, 2024 at 02:27 PM

KF

“ *I will always remember Thanksgiving dinners with Linda. There was always too much food, tons of love, and fun family games. Linda practically adopted me when my parents divorced. Leah was and still is my absolute bestest friend in the whole wide world. Sunday evenings downstairs eating dinner on TV trays and watching Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom followed by the Wonderful World of Disney. And many more cherished memories. I will miss her always.*  
*Kristen (Wardlaw) Frankforter*

---

Kristen Frankforter - September 20, 2024 at 02:40 PM



“ Hank and Lene purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Linda Porten.



---

**Hank and Lene** - September 15, 2024 at 12:03 AM



“ 4 files added to the album Memories Album



---

**Jefferson Funeral Chapel** - September 12, 2024 at 02:49 PM