



Vernita A. Copeland

December 14, 1933 - March 25, 2026

Vernita passed away peacefully on March 25, 2026, in Northbrook, Illinois. She was born on December 14, 1933, in Ishpeming, Michigan. A beloved wife, mother, grandmother, aunt and friend, Vernita lived a life marked by kindness, curiosity, and deep devotion to her family.

She is lovingly remembered by her daughters, Laura (Mike Flynn) and Bridget (Marc Mentel), and her six cherished grandchildren: Eric, Ryan, Bennet, and Audra Flynn; Mackenzie Lewis (née Mentel); and Riley Mentel. She was preceded in death by her devoted husband of 68 years, Joseph Copeland, and her parents, Paul and Florence (Ruthier) Anderson.

Vernita graduated from Lawrence University with a degree in English and History and dedicated much of her life to education. A retired teacher from Michigan Public Schools, she continued to share her love of learning as an English as a Second Language instructor, a special education aide, and an art history volunteer. At heart, Vernita was always a teacher, passionate about knowledge, endlessly curious, and a lifelong, voracious reader. She found great joy in book groups and in reading with and to her grandchildren.

She was also an avid gardener, nurturing both vegetables and flowers in Michigan and Arizona, and took pride in creating beauty wherever she lived. A lifelong member of the Delta Gamma sorority, Vernita remained actively

involved in service and cherished the friendships she built through the organization.

Vernita treasured time with her family, making countless cross-country trips over the years to stay connected. She and Joe shared a love of travel, embarking on annual road trips with a dog always by their side, and later exploring the world together in retirement. They spent 18 wonderful years in Arizona, embracing the beauty of the Sonoran Desert.

After Joseph's passing, Vernita spent her final decade in Northbrook, Illinois, where she enjoyed visits to the Chicago Botanic Gardens, local museums, reading, and sharing her time, wit and love with her daughters and family. She was deeply appreciative of the care and companionship provided by the staff members at North Shore Place and Accord Hospice.

A celebration of Vernita's life will be held at the Chicago Botanic Gardens, 1000 Lake Cook Road, Glencoe, IL, on June 20, 2026 at 2:00 pm. Interment will be private.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in tribute to Vernita to the Chicago Botanic Gardens (<https://www.chicagobotanic.org>) or the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum (<https://www.desertmuseum.org>).

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

JUN **20** (CT)

Chicago Botanic Garden
1000 Lake Cook Road
Glencoe, IL 60022