Eulogy of Retired Teacher Jean Schneider
By her daughter Risa Gay Keene

It’s incredible the love that people have for my mom. It seems that wherever she went she sprinkled fairy dust and magically people would smile, they would feel their strengths; the good would come out in them.

As a teacher she nurtured the love of art, music, dance, travel and compassion for those who were different. Many of her students still kept in touch with her. No surprise, she never let go of those she cared about.

As a cousin, aunt, mother and grandmother she taught us about our family and our heritage. She shared stories of when we were little, of when she was a child and even of before she was born.

As a friend my mother held each precious relationship in a special place in her heart. She always had a little gift from her travels or from her home that was a perfect fit for that friend.

As an activist my mother fought hard for what she believed in whether it was parking for the elderly at the railroad station or ending the Vietnam War.

She lived her life to the fullest with all the heart and soul that she had within her and then some. She was a doer. If she had an idea or saw a need which had to be met my mother was right there making it become a reality.

I could go on forever about the incredible things she did and felt, but I would be remiss if I didn’t talk about the joys of her life; my dad, Alder, Kendra, Woodra, Doug, Todd and me. My mom has made it possible for us to have opportunities that have broadened our awareness and helped to make us the wonderful people we are today. What a gift!

My mom’s life hasn’t always been easy. As we all know she had breast cancer over 50 years ago and of course there was Todd’s death. But she used the energy created by these tragedies to help and support others.

I’d like to share one of my most favorite stories my mother would tell. As she would travel the world my mother would handout “smasus”, smile face stickers. My mother always said that one day the bushman in Africa, the peasant in Romania, the royal guard in England, the park ranger in Maine, the painter in Mexico and weaver in Peru would accidentally meet and notice that each of them had a happy face sticker. With delight they would share their stories about this friendly crazy lady who they met.

My mother’s energy and enthusiasm were infectious and those of us who were close to her will always remember her boundless energy and determination.