

# Elinor Jane Loucks

February 26, 1932 — December 2, 2023 Madison



[https://www.cressfuneralservice.com/obituaries/elinor-loucks?fbclid=IwAR0CL\\_P3dIYIcFh5YCLmoeYJshEIF0\\_rv5hev6XDgNbe\\_jwv7mqjG4j3m7Q](https://www.cressfuneralservice.com/obituaries/elinor-loucks?fbclid=IwAR0CL_P3dIYIcFh5YCLmoeYJshEIF0_rv5hev6XDgNbe_jwv7mqjG4j3m7Q)

Longtime Madison resident, Elinor Loucks passed away on December 2, 2023, as she slept at her home. She is remembered by all as a staunch supporter of women's rights and environmental causes. Elinor Jane Bernstein was born on February 26, 1932, to Edward and Lillian (Waldman) Bernstein in Belleville Ontario Canada. Her father was a successful local businessman who had the means to build a fine house at 175 George Street in Belleville in 1937. Elinor lived a somewhat lonely existence in the large house being an only child during the overseas conflicts of the 30's and 40's. However, her parents, especially her father doted on her at every opportunity and when she was 8, he gave Elinor a Cairn Terrier named Tippy that was her devoted companion through her childhood.

Elinor excelled in school at every level. After completing primary school one year early, she attended High School at Moulton College, a private girl's school in Toronto. Her parents had been born and raised in Toronto and had many connections there so Elinor found her situation there to be warm and familiar. She finished High School in three years and enrolled at the University of Toronto in the Fall of 1949. She loved reading and writing and pursued a degree in English and was motivated to volunteer at the UT's daily newspaper, The Varsity. She started out as an office assistant in 1950, but by the Fall of 1951 the masthead listed her as a Make-up Assistant; make-up being the design of each page of the newspaper where headlines and photos are arranged to create a pleasing and utilitarian appearance. She moved up to Make-up editor in 1952 and advanced to Managing Editor for the 1953-54 school year as a grad student. She met several of her many lifelong friends while working on The Varsity. Among them, a forestry major named Orie Loucks. Similarly shy and bookish, Elinor and Orie became close friends who "ran" the newspaper for two years producing five issues per week. They both completed Baccalaureate degrees in 1953 and started graduate school Elinor continuing in English and Orie in Forestry.

The couple married in October 1955 starting an enduring and symbiotic partnership that would last 60 years. Orie's burgeoning career in ecology and environmentalism took the couple to homes in New Brunswick, Wisconsin, Nova Scotia, Texas, Indiana and Ohio. Notoriety brought opportunities to attend groundbreaking meetings in Warsaw, Moscow, Beijing, Tokyo, Amsterdam, and Delhi. In later years they would travel to dozens of foreign capitals; Sydney, Auckland, Athens and Florence were among her favorites. Elinor powered the scientific endeavors of Orie Loucks acting as business manager who oversaw the complex operations of Orie Loucks, tenured faculty; Orie Loucks, consultant and highly sought co-author; along with Orie Loucks, citizen activist. She kept the books, filed the records, prepared travel requests and prepared the family taxes all his life. Indeed, Orie Loucks' remarkable curriculum vitae would not have been possible without the household management Elinor provided.

Once her children were all in school, Elinor put her editing and composition skills to work with a series of limited term jobs preparing manuscripts for publication or serving as a department secretary. She volunteered her time liberally including a four-year stint as one of the first Prairie Society Newsletter Editors. In this case the job of editor included production and mailing, and a corner of the basement became a newsroom complete with a stencil mimeograph and an Addressograph machine. Luckily, she had mechanically minded children to keep the machines running. During their time in Oxford Ohio, Elinor volunteered as the one of the original organizers and, for a time, chief administrator of the Miami University Institute for Learning in Retirement. Orié and Elinor were active participants in ILR for eighteen years, often exploiting the writing classes to complete the book they wrote together with Orié's sister: *Surviving Four Migrations: The Loucks of Haliburton County*.

Elinor made friends everywhere she lived and was a loyal correspondent. She maintained friendships from High School, The Varsity and other UT schoolmates, Fredericton and every other City she lived in for the rest of her life. She was a pillar of a Unitarian Society in each city the family found itself, leaving particularly indelible marks at the Prairie UU Society in Madison and the Hopedale Community in Oxford Ohio.

Elinor's favorite things were reading, flowers, babies, puppies, theater, poetry, chocolate, mysteries and her children's music. She craved all types of puzzles: logic, word, jigsaw, and crossword, but only if they were difficult. She insisted that her children have proper manners and always use good grammar and was relatively successful at making this happen. She regularly copy-edited the written work of everyone in the household.

Elinor Loucks was preceded in death by her husband of more than 60 years, Orié Loucks, and is survived by her three children and their spouses, Eric (Mary) Loucks, Kimberly (Michael) Coplien and Ted (Tina Robbins) Loucks and by her grandchildren Emily Loucks, William Loucks and Lucy Robbins and many loving nephews and nieces in the Loucks and Bernstein families. Elinor and her family are grateful for the support and care she received at each of her local retirement communities and thanks all the staff at Waunakee Manor, Attic Angels, and UW Geriatrics. Elinor truly cherished the work of Dr. Eastman and her staff along with her long-time caregivers Malika and Carol. A celebration of the rich life of Elinor Loucks will be held at the Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society at 2:00 pm on February 3rd, 2024. Those wishing to make donations in her memory should consider any organization defending and promoting the rights of women or vulnerable populations.

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