

# *Celebration of Life Remembrances*



**Carol Noderer Mason  
December 7, 1929 - February 27, 2026**

Carol Mason, 96, of Del Mar, California, died on February 27, 2026, at home, surrounded by family and friends.

Born on December 7, 1929, in Long Beach to Lee and Ruth Noderer, Carol grew up in Chula Vista alongside her brother, Stuart. She attended the University of California, Berkeley, where she studied journalism and English and met her first husband, Richard Rypinski. Together they raised three children—Robin, Paul, and Glen—and settled in Del Mar in 1959.

Carol built a long career as an elementary school teacher in Del Mar, where she was known for combining classroom learning with time outdoors. She was active in her community and took part in local planning, environmental work, and civic organizations including the Sierra Club, League of Women Voters, Planned Parenthood, Preventing Gun Violence and Del Mar Community Connections. She was also a founding member of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of San Dieguito, where she remained engaged throughout her life.

Carol valued conversation, books, and music, and was a longtime member of writing and book groups. She spent many summers on her family's Lopez Island homestead in Washington State, often outdoors under the night sky. She enjoyed traveling widely and exploring cultural and historical narratives.

Carol remained curious and engaged throughout her life, even as she lost much of her vision and hearing. She stayed active in her community, kept up with friends old and new, and continued attending gatherings, discussions, and events into her nineties. She loved holding court on her deck with the soft breeze of the ocean until her last day.

She married Robert Mason following her marriage to Richard. Following his death, she continued to share her home with friends and family. In later years, her partner was David Oberlin. She is survived by her three children, grandchildren (Adrian and Evan Hodos and Dayvid, Omar and Alexi Rypinski), and three great-grandchildren (Arda Camsari, Orion and Amari Rypinski), as well as extended family. She was preceded in death by her brother Stuart, her husbands Richard Rypinski and Robert Mason, and her partner David Oberlin.

A Celebration of Life Service and Reception was held June 27, 2026, at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of San Dieguito of which she was a founding member.

While Carol loved flowers, we know she would prefer you wear beautiful colors in celebration of her life and contribute to one of her favorite organizations if you choose to. These are: [Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of San Dieguito](#) and [Del Mar Community Connections](#)

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**Debbie Hecht** Carol and I had a great friendship! We met at Mai Lon's writing class at St. Peter's church in 2012. Lynn Gaylord told me about the class and helped to get me a seat. I met Carol, Anne Silber, and Bill Brooks all at the same time. We wrote at St. Peter's once a week for years and then moved to Zoom during Covid. In the last few years, we have been meeting at Del Mar Community Connections.

During our weekly writing classes, Carol wrote frequently about Lopez Island where she spent most summers with her immediate family from Chula Vista and other relatives. She stopped going to Lopez a few years ago. I know she missed being there and sleeping outside on the porch. My partner, Jon Luft and I had a Sprinter van and took a long trip along the coast through California, Oregon, and Washington and then we ferried to the San Juan islands. We went to Friday Harbor and then over to Lopez where we explored the island and camped at Carol's house. What a magical place! I could see why she loved it there. Carol's house was old fashioned, and she was committed to keeping it that way. The view from the house and shoreline was expansive and beautiful. The quiet was healing and restful. It truly is the perfect place to retreat and recharge. The people on Lopez island were the friendliest people we met anywhere. Everyone waves at each other when they pass you. She was so pleased to hear my impressions when we returned.

During the covid pandemic, Carol and I would meet at Jimmy Durante and walk along the river. She was an avid birder and taught me the names of the birds and we observed their habits. There are huge Torrey Pines that we called the apartment buildings, where blue herons and the giant white egrets nested and raised their young in the spring. They would fly in and out to hunt. We would walk to check the osprey nests at the Fairgrounds, watching the parents feed the new babies and watch the fledglings learn to fly. She loved seeing the yellow crowned night herons that were nesting in the tree across from my house in Del Mar. We had some great "walk and talks" and became close friends.

Jon and I would frequently take Carol to the Unitarian Fellowship in Solana Beach. Carol was a founding member of the Fellowship in 1959. On Mondays, I would usually take her to class at Del Mar Community connections and then have lunch and work in her garden, dead heading and feeding the plants. Her beloved wood frame house is set into a wooded area in a ravine that looks down at the ocean.

Carol was a wonderful sounding board to me to solidifying my thinking to write essays and sermons on Racism, Resilience and Becoming Adept at Adapting. As she approached 96, Carol was a model of resilience. She had bounced back from 3 hip replacements, falls, losing her hearing and sight. We had a lot of personal jokes. When I wouldn't see her for a while, she would ask me if she "was circling the drain any further down"? About a month ago, she didn't ask me, so I told her I thought she wasn't circling any further down. That got a big smile! As she lost her hearing, she was so frustrated with her old phone's hook up to her hearing aids. Then her eyesight faded from glaucoma, and she adapted by getting around her house from memory. I was always amazed that she coordinated caregivers, a bookkeeper, housecleaners, gardeners, repair people, her attorney and even got a new microwave. She kept moving forward.

Carol had a great sense of humor and loved to laugh. I delighted in making her laugh! She was also the best conversationalist that I know. I talked to her at least once a week, and she would start the conversation where we had left off.

Carol had an almost perfect last week of life. She went to church on Sunday, celebrated the new parking

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area with Fellowship friends and walked up and down the new concrete ramp 4 times with her walker. I didn't think she could do it, but she did. That was Carol - tell her that you were worried about her stamina, and she would prove you wrong. On Monday after our writing class, I drove her home and we had lunch and talked for 2 and half hours. As always, we had an honest heartfelt conversation. I think she loved our talks as much as I did.

On Friday I arrived at the house that she built in Del Mar among the Torrey pines to find friends and family gathered around. She had been breathless most of the day. Hospice had arrived. It was a beautiful, balmy evening and Carol was sitting on her beloved porch, facing the setting sun. The garden was lush with new spring growth and the air was fragrant. I was honored to sit by her side, rub her arm, kiss her and tell her I loved her, and that we would all miss her, but if she wanted to go, we would understand. The sun was going down, and I realized that she was not able to see the last sunset of her life. I described to her how it looked. The Torrey pines were silhouetted against the luminescent turquoise sky, that blended to cottony clouds reflecting the golden light of the setting sun, blending to an orange lilac layer and to a deeper purple and into the blue- gray of the ocean. Later, Paul, her son and Ana told me that she lifted her head and smiled as the sun broke through the clouds to shine on her face. They said it was the only time she smiled all day. I think she felt at peace.

A short time later, others sat by her side to say good-bye, and she indicated she wanted to go to bed. We got her into the bed that hospice had just brought, and within 5 minutes she left us, with her signature style and grace, serenely lying with her face composed. Her hands crossed serenely at her waist, in her living room in the beloved house she built. It was a "good" death, and I was honored to say goodbye and hopefully ease her way. I was honored to call her a friend. She will be missed!



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**Christie Turner** On Carol's 11th birthday, her family was heading for Anthony's Fish Grotto for a celebration, when they noticed many sailors walking toward their ships. When her Dad pulled over to ask the reason, "The United States has been attacked at Pearl Harbor, we are at war!" So for her middle and early high school years, the WWII was ongoing. After high school, her Dad said he would buy her a car if she stayed in San Diego for college, but she turned him down and went to Berkeley. She married and began her family. They were advised against buying property in Del Mar which was then considered "the sticks." She was active with other families the tiny village in its early days.

Carol was a founding member of the UUFSD where she was treasured for her deep understanding of its history and values. She was a creator of their programs for children and an advocate for the principles on which it was founded.

Carol loved learning and adventure. These explorations included six months in Guatemala to learn Spanish and a return to that country in her eighties to help women with birth control methods. Her family had a house on Lopez Island off the coast of Seattle. For many years, she drove from Del Mar to Lopez Island, stopping at hiking trails all along the way, many of which she knew by heart and would enthusiastically share with her traveling companions. Late into her life, Carol would go there every summer for as many weeks as she could, often sleeping outside in her mummy sleeping bag so she could see the stars no matter how cold the temperature.

Carol cared deeply about social justice and could be seen at political demonstrations well into her nineties. She loved doing research and becoming informed and then debating the issues of the day. She never shrank from controversy but welcomed all sides and then made up her own mind. This passion included her involvement in her community of Del Mar as well as national issues, especially the rights of women. When a close friend was asked, "How would Carol want to be remembered?" "That she didn't take shit from anybody!"

**Tracy Weiss** Carol was one of the first members of UUFSD that I met when I first began working there. She made me feel so very welcomed and always had a smile for me. We even took exercise classes together for a while in Founders Hall. I was stunned that she seemed to be in better shape than me at her age! She was an amazing human being with a strong spirit and a heart full of love. The world is a sadder place because of her loss but also very blessed because she lived. Farewell sweet Carol.

**Irving Himelblau** I met Carol in early 2001, but never established a relationship with her. However, we did meet occasionally at Social Justice events. One of these events took place in October 2016, where she organized a demonstration to End Gun Shows at the Del Mar Fairgrounds. She was a member of Three members of the UUFSD, Carol Mason, Roger Harmon and I were among the thirty-one protesters at the Del Mar Fairgrounds. The demonstrators were demanding the closing of gun sale loopholes and the eventual removal of gun shows from the Del Mar Fairgrounds.

**Betsy Gilpin** I feel very fortunate to have made Carol's acquaintance and spend some time with her over the years. Carol was an adept conversationalist. She was well read and thus well informed, and could talk extensively on pretty much any subject that might come up. She had opinions but I would not classify her as opinionated. In fact, she had a way of honing in on the key questions and issues concerning any subject. Time spent with Carol was always time well spent.

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**Karen Eckhardt** I first met Carol in the late 60s when she was librarian at Pine Elementary School in Carlsbad and I was teaching English as a Second Language. Always flexible and supportive, she shared a corner of her library space with me and my small groups of lively learners in 4th through 6th grades. Fast forward fifty years, and we met again at UUFSO! Through our women's group I got the chance to know her better, and to experience the grace, humor and positivity with which she met her physical challenges. Hearing Fellowship lore from a Founder was a delight. I will miss her.

**Eberly Barnes** Carol Mason was my good friend, and I miss her very deeply. When I moved here from New York, I didn't know anyone. Once I became friends with Carol, I felt at home. She helped me feel settled, seen, and known. When I was with her, time disappeared. We laughed and talked and told our stories, and we listened to one another. We went on many adventures together—from hiking her property, which she designed like magical woods, to the beaches of Del Mar to Anza Borrego, Lopez Island, and the long drive from here to there. She introduced me to my husband Charlie, and we three had some of the best conversations I've ever had, sitting around her table, reading and talking through the night. She was an incredibly generous and gracious host, and her home was a magnet for a seemingly endless parade of wonderful people. It was also a refuge in nature, somehow feeling both tucked in the woods and private, while we sat on her wide open deck and looked at the ocean. Every visit with Carol was a revelation. The first time I went over to her place, a bird flew into the window and died. She guided me in gathering it up and finding the right spot to bury it and giving it a ceremony. I felt like a little child, and was so delighted by the tenderness and care she showed the bird, that I almost forgot the sadness of the loss. To me, this was Carol—she turned everything into an adventure with reverence, playfulness, and joy. She was a force of nature with an indomitable spirit, a great conversationalist, and endlessly curious about life. She was a magic woman, and I am eternally grateful to her.



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## From Members of Carol's Writing Group

**Kathleen Murray** Memories of Carol

To those of you who have known Carol Mason longest, as friend and neighbor, I offer my condolences. Her passing leaves an empty space in our writing room at DMCC, in the larger community and in the world. But for you, there will be visible reminders of her absence as you pass by her home, her church and other places you shared. I envy those sad/joyful memories you carry in your hearts.

To the others who have known Carol Mason for too short a time, I share the sad thought that we wish we had come to the writing group earlier, to have known her longer and better.

As I write, my thoughts are drawn to a story of her childhood bicycle. She was so disappointed in the old used bike her father bought and restored. She was longing for a shiny new bike, like the other children had. Her disappointment was profound – but even at a young age she was becoming aware of her values and in no time, she rapidly changed her perception of that old bike as she thought of her father, lovingly restoring it, and the sacrifices he made for her. She soon loved that bike.

**Lillian Lachicotte,** Hey Carol,

How is it up there in heaven? Debbie has just told our class that you had an easy passing... wow, you so deserved that!!

Have to tell you that I wasn't pleased to hear that you passed. I enjoyed, grew from and learned so much from all the stories you shared of your life. You had a wonderful gift for relating in a clearly organized and meaningful way events that happened to you. Your stories revealed your kindness, and how supportive, nurturing and precious you were.

You were an inspiration to all in our class. You had a broad intelligence that included not only mental intelligence, but social and intuitive intelligence as well.

So, Carol, you who now sit in that mysterious heavenly realm which I believe is populated by friends and family who passed before you, I can just imagine your happiness being with them, enjoying renewed hearing and vision and reflecting on your beautiful, full life here on Earth.

And, hey Carol, come visit us sometime so we can feel your presence and remember your delightful spirit.  
Love, Lillian

**Carol Kerridge** To Carol, we've known each other for the best part of 40 years. We were soul mates together in our quest to make Del Mar a wonderful place to live. You played a huge part in that goal, Carol, for many of your students (now in their 50s & 60s) still remember how you taught them, disciplined them, and happily played with them. Many have become leaders in their field of endeavors such as music, science, banking, and teaching. They've become good parents too, and they continue to credit you with bountiful praise. What I remember most is your truth and honesty. Above all, you taught us those virtues as you spoke to City Council by giving these thoughtful opinions when helping to make Del Mar decisions. The lessons and stories of your past life will be truly remembered, particularly in our writing class.

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## *From Members of Carol's Writing Group*

**Linda Chisari**

### **Happy Birthday, Carol Mason!**

There once was a woman named Carol,  
Who, even when over a barrel  
With poor hearing and sight  
Still showed spirit and might  
Wearing wisdom and humor as apparel.

Now Carol has turned ninety-six  
And her long-cherished memories still stick  
She writes like a pro  
Letting all of us know  
What it takes to, with joy, stay transfixed.

So, thank you, dear Carol, our friend  
For the happy memories you extend  
To all in this class  
As we look to our pasts  
At the lifetimes we've been lucky to spend!

**Barbara Aufiero** Beloved Carol Mason I had the privilege of knowing Carol Mason for no more than six months. In truth, we overlapped in fewer than twenty writer's group sessions, yet she made a lasting impression on me.

Carol's ability to craft profound and entertaining stories, as if from thin air, was astounding. I remember glancing at her writer's group notebook, its pages marked with bold lines on every other row, and pausing. Where were the words? Was it possible that her beautiful, lively, endearing stories emerged directly from thought? The realization struck me like a thunderbolt. Her magnificent mind was conjuring, retaining, and, when it was her turn, delivering a story so eloquent and perfectly detailed, filled with delightful elements of compassion and humor. Simply amazing!

I cherished all of her stories. Whether flirting with the police officer who stopped her for speeding while rushing to keep her Thanksgiving dishes warm; bravely and candidly describing her frustrations feeling invisible and unheard, told with remarkable courage and dignity; or gifting us with a priceless living documentary as one of Del Mar's founding patrons, her words captivated the room. With bated breath, we hung onto each and every word. Her gift of storytelling has left me in awe.

Carol, I shall miss you terribly. You were my champion. You were someone who taught me the importance of staying genuine, living your truest life until the end, and embracing the totality of being human, with all its fidelity and flaws. I vow to keep that spirit alive.

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## *From Members of Carol's Writing Group*

**Lynn Gaylord** “Adapt, Adapt, Adapt”

These were the three words that Carol Mason and I often spoke to each other as we shared our twenty-five years of writing together. As we wrote about hurdles and also joys in life, there was always room for these three words of advice “adapt, adapt, adapt.”

Carol was such an inspiration for me in how to meet life’s aging challenges. One step at a time she climbed the stairs to her beloved home. Hands on the rails and one step at a time.

In her refrigerator, the pills were always on the left, second shelf down, pre-packaged and ready for consumption. Eggs were to the right and drinks right above.

Caretakers had certain jobs and were ready to help when needed. Carol treated them like family and rightfully so. She had no hesitations about asking for help if she felt she needed it. No matter what the occasion was, Carol was up for it. There were never any reservations based on her potential shortcomings.

Her motto was always “adapt, adapt, adapt,” and I will be forever grateful to her for the example she provided in how to live the life I want. Just adapt, adapt, adapt.