



Mary Jane Carter

July 10, 1929 - December 26, 2015

MARY JANE CARTER

MARY JANE CARTER, 86, of Racine died on December 26th, 2015 at Wheaton Franciscan (St. Mary's) Hospital, Racine following a stroke. Born in Chicago, IL, she was the daughter of the late Paul Albon and Jane C. (nee: Walker) Davis. At the age of 2, she moved with her family to Kenosha where she grew up, attending Durkee Elementary school, Lincoln Jr. High, and Bradford High School. She began her college career at Northwestern University in Evanston, IL. After her family moved to Missouri, she completed her B.A. and M.A. degrees in English and Theatre at the University of Kansas City, now the University of Missouri at Kansas City. She taught English and Speech and Drama, and directed play productions, at the high school and college levels in Missouri, Kansas, Massachusetts and New York. Additionally, she began her professional career as a stage director for the inaugural season of the Lyric Theatre opera company in Kansas City, and subsequently directed and acted in academic, community and professional theatre venues for many years in New York, New England and the Mid-West.

Mary Jane began a second career in her 40s as a paralegal. She obtained her state certification from New York University Law School in New York City, and worked as a paralegal in the field of intellectual property for two law firms in the city, and later in the Law Department of PepsiCo, Inc. in Purchase, NY, from which position she retired after 10 years. She returned to the Kenosha/Racine area at the time of her mother's death in 1994.

In 1958 Mary Jane had married David Findlay Dodds and moved to New York. They subsequently divorced. In August of 2005 she married Colin J. R. Carter of Racine, whom she met while working at the Racine Theatre Guild. They made their home in Racine.

Among a variety of interests in her life, two stand out as major commitments: her devotion to the theatre, which was nurtured by her parents and began as a young teen with the old Kenosha Little Theatre; and a love of the outdoors, especially birds, and a consequent passion for conservation. While living in New York, Mary Jane was a member of the Board of Directors for the city chapter of the League of Women Voters, responsible for program development and public discussion forums on the issues of clean air and clean water: work which ultimately resulted in laws to support and enforce reforms in these vital areas. She was a past member of the Sierra Club, and at the time of her death was a member of the Audubon Society, the International Crane Foundation, Nature Conservancy, Clean Waters Wisconsin, and the Natural Resources Defense Council. In college, she had been a member of Alpha Delta Pi social sorority.

Mary Jane and her husband Colin were also active members and season ticket holders at the Racine Theatre Guild, and attended the Lakeside Players' productions in Kenosha. Another strongly shared interest was music, including opera, ballet, musical theatre, and symphony and chamber concerts. Husband and wife also shared an enthusiasm for reading, travel, and crossword puzzles. Mary Jane thoroughly enjoyed the English sports of cricket and rugby, which her husband—a native of England—had explained to her. She also liked American football, albeit with divided loyalties; basically she was a New England Patriots fan, but in Wisconsin became a somewhat reluctant fan of the Packers.

In addition to her parents, Mary Jane was preceded in death by her brother, Paul Davis II, her sister-in-law Lillian H. Davis, and a niece Helen Elizabeth in infancy. She is survived by her husband Colin, her daughter Elizabeth D. Trimbach of Connecticut, her step-daughter Kirsten S.E. Carter of Milwaukee,

her step-son Ashley J.R. Carter of California, and four grandchildren
Visitation will be held on Wednesday, December 30th, 2015 at Sturino Funeral Home from 10 am with funeral services to follow at 12 noon with Rev. Dr. Tony Larsen officiating. She will be laid to rest at Sunset Ridge Memorial Park and Mausoleum. Those wishing to remember Mary Jane in a special way may direct memorials to Audubon Society, the International Crane Foundation or the Nature Conservancy.

Previous Events

Visitation

DEC 30. 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Sturino Funeral Home
3014 Northwestern Avenue
Racine, WI 53404
(262) 632-4479
info@sturinofuneralhome.com

Funeral Service

DEC 30. 12:00 PM (CT)

Sturino Funeral Home
3014 Northwestern Avenue
Racine, WI 53404
(262) 632-4479
info@sturinofuneralhome.com

Tribute Wall



“ *Sturino Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Mary Jane Carter*



Sturino Funeral Home - December 29, 2015 at 05:14 PM

LL

What a beautiful tribute to a beautiful lady and her life. She lived a life full of passion for her family, friends, careers, theater, and appreciation of the world through her many travels. Here's to a life well lived. Lynda Laudonio

Lynda Laudonio - December 30, 2015 at 11:16 AM

TO

A moving miscellany of Mary Jane's gracious nature expressed especially in her face s as seen in the many places that she visited and with the people who loved and admired her.

Tim and Doreen Ollier (Darlington, UK)

Tim and Doreen Ollier - January 02, 2016 at 10:46 AM

RT

I have just read the short story of a lovely romance coming late in life. It must have been fate! How lucky the two of them were. We only met Mary Jane once (in the UK, a couple of summers ago) but she was a lovely lady and it was obvious what Colin had seen in her.

Richard (Colin's cousin) and his wife Jan (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK)

Richard Taylor - January 04, 2016 at 05:55 PM



Wonderful video, I think it captured the essence of Mary Jane perfectly.

Jeffrey Gray - January 04, 2016 at 07:39 PM

LL

“ I'll always remember going to Ravinia Festival with Mary Jane and a group of theater friends. We were headed back to our car at the end of the evening and the parking lot was near the train station. It was a beautiful moonlit summer night and we were all a little giddy from our fun evening out. Then as if on cue, a train rolled into the station. Mary Jane squealed with joy at the sight and walked towards it, her hair blowing in the wind of the passing train. With a huge smile on her face, she raised her hand and started to wave. Completely lost in the moment, she stood there waving until it finally rolled to a stop. Then she turned to us and exclaimed "I just love trains!" with the biggest grin on her face that I had ever seen. What a magical moment. Boy, did she love trains!

She was so passionate about the things she loved, such a perfectionist and one of the most talented actresses I have ever had the pleasure of being on stage with. She really cared, always putting her heart and soul into everything I ever saw her do.

I always looked for Mary Jane's feedback after a show if she was in the audience, because I knew she would always give me an honest and heartfelt critique.

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."
– Maya Angelou

Mary Jane, you made me feel like anything was possible if I really put my mind to it.

Thank you!

Laura Larson - March 24, 2016 at 01:06 AM

JH

“ *It was always such a joy to be with Mary Jane. Her smile lit up the room whenever she walked in. I will always cherish the opportunity I had to work with her and Colin with Terra Nova. She is a special person and now the Heaven's have a new star to light up the Universe.*

Jeff Hughes - January 05, 2016 at 07:44 AM

LD

“ *Mary Jane was a wonderful woman and I will miss her dearly.*



Laurene Dolan - January 04, 2016 at 08:55 PM

PS

“ *It was a pleasure to meet Mary Jane in 2014 when we visited Racine. Just looking through the photos again has brought us some great memories.*
English cousins Janet and Phil



Phil Shaddock - January 03, 2016 at 07:44 AM

“ Part 2

After that, tired of driving down to Kenosha all the time, Colin asked Mary Jane if she would like to live with him. And she refused!! The reason was that there was no room in Colin's condo for all her “stuff”. Luckily, she had already found out that new and larger condos were under construction in the same subdivision, so they set about buying one. It was 50% larger than the old one and thus could accommodate all their lifetime of possessions.

As for marriage, they held off on that for a while to see if things would continue to go well, which they did. So on New Years Eve 2004, Colin once again had to take the lead in asking Mary Jane to marry him. She agreed and the wedding was held at the Hobnob Restaurant in August 2005. The ceremony was conducted by Emily Mueller (a judge, but more importantly a friend and fellow actress at RTG).

Their honeymoon was in Greece, where Mary Jane had always wanted to go, and especially for the theatres. During the next ten years they made three more trips to Britain and a River Cruise in Europe. They saw both sides of Canada and all corners of the USA. Other highlights included various graduations and the weddings of Mary Jane's three grandsons. Nearer home, they often went to both Door County and Spring Green, which has an excellent professional theatre. And of course there were plays to see in Racine and Kenosha, as well as ballets, operas and concerts. There always seemed to be something to do.

2015 saw their tenth anniversary, which they celebrated with another lunch at the Hobnob with most of the same family and friends, plus others who had been added to the family in the meantime. They also went to the wedding of Colin's daughter Kirsten in Lacrosse.

At the beginning, they had said they would take things one day at a

time, which they did for a while. But as it turned out, days turned into weeks, weeks turned into months and months turned into years, 13 wonderful years to be precise. Everything went so well, their way of life so easy and familiar. Of course, Colin knew (intellectually) that it would not last for ever, but it was still a shock when the end came so quickly. Mary Jane's stroke on December 4th was followed by a very rapid decline. There was no time to prepare, or really even to say goodbye. That was hard. But there were plenty of good memories and these will certainly remain.

Colin Carter - January 02, 2016 at 10:06 AM



“ AN UNLIKELY ROMANCE

Colin wanted me to share some of the details of his relationship with Mary Jane – an unlikely romance in some ways, but one that certainly brightened up their lives quite a bit.

In 2002, Colin was a widower, living alone in a small condo in Racine, his first wife having died some years earlier. Mary Jane was divorced and living alone in a small apartment in Kenosha.

Both were interested in theatre. Colin is not an actor, but he comes from a family of actors and had had season tickets to the Racine Theatre Guild for many years. Mary Jane, on the other hand, had been involved in theatre all her life, both as an actress and director. She had been in productions at both RTG and Lakeside Players in Kenosha.

The chance was that they both volunteered to be ushers at RTG and were assigned to the same ushering crew (a one in sixteen chance). This group was headed by Jay and Melissa Warner, who became good friends, because of/despite being always held being responsible for the way things turned out.

It was Mary Jane who took the initiative. Her story is that she first noticed Colin when he entered the lobby of the theatre dressed in a blue sweatshirt with a red cardinal on it. He also had an English accent, which apparently helped, since she was a great anglophile.

She definitely engaged him in conversation, usually in the interval after they had finished serving at the concession stand. However, these conversations continued long after the audience had returned to their seats. so that Colin later complained that he never did get to see the rest of the plays. Beyond that, Mary Jane was waiting for Colin to make the next move. Which he finally did – they later always referred to it a the “fateful phone call”. Tired of missing the second act of all the plays, he summoned up all his courage to call her to ask her out for a date. She wasn't there, so he left a message

on her answering machine. She later returned home, heard the message and (so she said) punched the air in triumph before calling him back to accept. But then he wasn't there, so she in turn left a message. It wasn't until much later that day that they finally did get to talk directly to each other on the phone and agreed to a date in Kenosha, at a restaurant of Mary Jane's choice.

Given their mutual interest in trains, she wanted the first date to be at the old North Shore interurban station in Kenosha, but when she went there to check it out, she found that it had been changed from a restaurant into a day care centre. So she moved to plan B, Brewmasters Pub – Colin also has a love of beer. The evening went well and she invited Colin back to her apartment for a cup of tea, but not before warning him that any hanky panky was definitely out on the first date. Apparently Colin behaved himself well enough that the relationship continued with visits to their respective cities and homes.

*After a few dates, there came the “fateful kiss”. Again, Mary Jane waited for Colin to make the first move. When he said “I haven't kissed you yet”, she did not say “What the *** were you waiting for?”, but Colin always assumed she was thinking it. In any case, she responded very positively. We won't go into any more personal details, suffice it to say that the relationship developed quite rapidly.*

2003 was an important year for them. First, they went on a trip to the UK - England, Wales (where some of Mary Jane's ancestors came from), Scotland and even the Orkney Islands, where Mary Jane communed with standing stones many thousands of years old.

After that, tired of driving down to Kenosha all the time, Colin asked Mary Jane if she would like to live with him. And she refused!! The reason was that there was no room in Colin's condo for all her “stuff”. Luckily, she had already found out that new and larger condos were under construction in the same subdivision, so they set about buying one. It was 50% larger than the old one and thus cou

Colin Carter - January 02, 2016 at 10:03 AM

MA

“ I'm the nurse at Dr. Jeranek office's. I encountered Mary Jane through many years. She was always so pleasant to me. I really enjoyed her telling me what was going on in her life. I'm sorry for your loss.

Maureen Anderson - December 29, 2015 at 09:39 PM



“ 69 files added to the album LifeTributes



Sturino Funeral Home - December 29, 2015 at 04:35 PM



“ Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Mary Jane Carter.



December 28, 2015 at 10:21 PM



“ *Pink Tribute Spray was purchased for the family of Mary Jane Carter.* ”



December 28, 2015 at 06:13 PM