



Joyce Helen Jones McCollaum

November 5, 1928 - January 25, 2026

On January 25, 2026, Joyce Helen Jones McCollaum fought her final war with pain and crossed that river into the arms of her Savior and all those she loved who were waiting on the shore.

Born the second daughter of Fred and Myrtle Jones in 1928, Joyce came from a humble but uniquely happy home. Tinged by the grief of losing their first child to whooping cough, Fred and Myrtle lavished their remaining daughter and son Marvin with indulgent love. Though poor, from her childhood, Joyce nurtured dreams of being a wife and mother, of going to school, of traveling the world, and of writing.

Joyce excelled at reading and was placed in second grade when just five years old, but because of family finances, she did not think college was in her future. At fifteen, she was already working part time her senior year at the Clayton Feed Store, when an unclaimed scholarship to Eastern New Mexico University was offered to her. Suddenly a new life opened, and she headed to Portales. There she met one of her dearest friends, Ola McCollaum, who was destined to be her sister-in-law. When Ola's oldest brother, John Lowell, returned from serving in the Fourth Marines in the Pacific theater, he decided to use the GI Bill to study Industrial Arts.

Even before Ola introduced them, Lowell noticed Joyce working in the Registrar's Office. She was pretty and petite and remarkably efficient. She

also had those “killer blue eyes.” Soon enough, they were dating.

They married in June of 1948. Joyce quit school, and their first son, Allen Dean

McCollaum, was born nine months later. When their second son, John Frederick, arrived three and a half years after that, the family was excited about Lowell’s career as a high school teacher beginning. After two failed pregnancies, doctors informed Joyce she was unlikely to have any more children. She decided to try and finish getting her Bachelor’s in Journalism and planned to enroll in some summer classes. She decided to sell the baby crib, and then she got a call. Ten years after her second son, her only daughter Eva was born.

Six years later her third son and last child, Brian Douglas, was born, nineteen years after her first. Since going back to school was out of the question, Joyce re-entered the workforce when she was hired by Paul Peyton, an honest-to-goodness newspaper man. She worked briefly as a copy editor, then Lowell was offered the high school principal job in Estancia. That’s when Mr. Peyton offered her a chance at her dream job. She became the editor-in-chief of the

Torrance County Citizen. She worked there seven years. The family then decided to relocate to northern New Mexico and a small town called Canyon, so Lowell could serve as high school principal at Jemez Valley High School. There Joyce found a job as a loan officer for a local credit union. Eventually, Lowell decided he wanted to leave school administration, and so he returned to the classroom as the Auto Mechanics teacher at Deming High School. In Deming, Joyce became the office administrator for the Luna County Health Office.

When Lowell died unexpectedly, Joyce was left a widow at 53 with one child still at home. Her second act began, but she never remarried. Lowell was the

only man she ever loved.

At sixty-seven Joyce retired and moved to Roswell to live with her daughter. Finally with no fear of getting pregnant again, she re-enrolled in college and graduated from Eastern on December 12, 1997.

As a widow, she also became a world traveler—visiting Australia with her dear friend

Jean Brown, visiting Chile to see her sweet family friend Patti English, traveling all over the

United States with Elderhostel, and going to Spain with a college group. In her retirement she became a busy volunteer. She taught Sunday School at First Baptist Church (which she did in every town where she lived), became the toy lady at JIREH at the church. She was active with

Habitat for Humanity for twenty years. She became a docent for the South Eastern New Mexico

Historical Museum, and participated in politics with the Democratic Party.

As a charter member of the JOY Writers, founded in 1999, she pursued the art of writing until the very last week of her life. She managed to complete various stories, poems, articles and essays along with a novel based on her parents' lives titled *The Last Sharecropper*, and a collection of short stories set entirely in the SENM Historical Museum Phelps White mansion titled *Lea Mansion Mysteries*.

Joyce was preceded in death by her parents, her brother, her beloved John Lowell, her son John Frederick, and a host of cousins, nephews and nieces.

She is survived by her son Allen

Dean McCollaum and daughter-in-law Carrie Webber, by daughter-in-law Carolyn Perry

McCollaum, by her daughter Eva McCollaum, by her son Brian Douglas

McCollaum and daughter-in-law Heather McCollaum, by her grandson Orson

Webber McCollaum and granddaughter-in-law Ruth Netzalwalt, by her grandson Eugene Webber McCollaum, by her granddaughter Alexis Rose Webber McCollaum, and by her sweet and smiling great granddaughter Mystic Joyce McCollaum.

In the end, her life is a testament to the saving grace of Jesus and the peculiar power of certain little girls' dreams.

The public is invited to attend her memorial and celebration of life March 14, 2026, at 10:00 am at the First Baptist Church of Roswell, New Mexico.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

MAR 14. 10:00 AM (MT)

First Baptist Church
500 N Pennsylvania Ave
Roswell, NM 88201

Tribute Wall



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Joyce Helen Jones McCollaum.

March 13 at 12:07 PM



“ Small Garden Dish was purchased for the family of Joyce Helen Jones McCollaum.



March 13 at 12:07 PM



“ The Stratton and Hull Families purchased the Rose Remembrance for the family of Joyce Helen Jones McCollaum.



The Stratton and Hull Families - March 09 at 09:00 PM



“ Cindy E. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joyce Helen Jones McCollaum.

Cindy E. - March 06 at 10:30 PM

KM

“ Mom thought so highly of Joyce and It was an honor to meet her.
An amazing life she had. May she rest in peace.

Kathy Mounts - January 29 at 01:24 PM

TW

“ Eva and family,
What a wonderful woman Joyce was. I am honored to have known
her and what a beautiful tribute you've written.
Tina Williams

Tina Williams - January 28 at 05:18 PM

JS

What a special lady! She was a natural born teacher with so much life
experience to share. May God comfort each family member particularly
Eva through this difficult time. Thankfully God gives us hope and
comfort .
With love, Jerry Stone

Jerry Stone - February 03 at 10:27 AM