

# Marjorie Dorson Harvey



Marjorie Dorson Harvey, 91, [journalist](#), teacher, social activist, and a woman who welcomed friends and relatives by the dozens to her dinner table and empty bedrooms, died in her sleep on June 1, 2013. She had wanted to die that way in that room overlooking the beautiful back field with occasional deer and many rabbits-- and she did. Marjorie Dorson was born in New York City on Nov. 5, 1921, the youngest of the three children of Gertrude and Louis Dorson. She attended the Dalton School in Manhattan and was graduated from Vassar College in 1942. She went to Tanager Lodge, a coed camp in upstate New York, where she met a tall, dark, handsome camp counselor, Henry Stimson Harvey. They married in 1942 while he was still a student at Union Theological Seminary. Following his ordination into the Congregational ministry, the couple settled in Redvale, CO, ministering to a three-church parish on the western slope of the water from an irrigation ditch. She also helped sort sheep, run a scout program, and taught Sunday school. In 1945 they returned east, and Henry attended Harvard Medical School. After his graduation and an internship in Cooperstown, NY, where their first two children arrived, they settled in Littleton, MA, in 1951, where Henry was cofounder of Acton Medical Associates, and she ran a busy household of eight. Because of her blood Rh factor, she lost three full term babies. When their four surviving children were all in school, Marjorie studied at Brandeis University for an MA in English and taught at Concord Academy from 1963 to 1971. For four of those years the Harveys housed some of the first African-American students to attend Concord Academy through the A Better Chance Program. Returning to school for an MS in journalism from Boston University, she embarked on a career in free lance writing that included publishing in the Boston Herald, the Boston Globe, and for more than twenty years, a column for the weekly Littleton Independent. In 1999 she published a collection of her columns entitled Notes from the Common . She spent the last two months of her life collecting and editing a second volume that will appear this summer One Voice: More Notes from the Common. Harvey was a lover of outdoor sports (skiing, skating, swimming, tennis boating, hiking), of theater (the more serious and meaningful the better), of travel (Cuba several times before it was

fashionable; Tour de Mont Blanc in her late 60s; Africa and Vietnam, Haiti and Nicaragua), of gardening (everything grew for her), and of books (from Jane Austen to Thich Nhat Hanh). An enthusiastic believer in the importance of place, of putting down roots in a small town, she served on the Littleton School Committee, on the Conservation Commission, and as Outside Editor of the Concord prison newspaper. A pacifist who cared deeply about issues of social justice, she was a veteran of many anti-war protests and peace vigils. At age 79, she and 21 others (including 85-year-old Henry) were arrested in Washington, DC, and briefly jailed for a prayerful vigil that partially blocked entry to the Department of Energy, a protest against drilling for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Friends called their 1830 farmhouse Harveys Hostel because of the number of young friends and relations who came to stay years. At last count more than forty people had lived with them for more than a month, some for years; they arrived from, among other places, Africa, Vietnam, Colombia, Austria, England, Alaska, Maine, and Foster Street. Both Marjorie and were committed members of Littleton's First Church Unitarian, serving on various boards and committees. One of the most rewarding of these experiences, according to Marjorie, was co-chairing a Council of Churches committee that brought a large Vietnamese boat family from refugee camps to settle in Littleton. In addition to her husband of seventy years (and they still liked each other, she said), Marjorie is survived by four children Sheridan Richard, Robin, Henry, Jr. (Tim), eight grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren. A memorial service will be held this summer.

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