

## Marieke Adriana Allen



It is with great sadness that we mourn the passing of our beloved friend Marieke Allen. She was born in the Netherlands on May 31, 1926 and passed on September 5, 2024 at a very young 95 years of age. Marieke grew up as a young girl/teenager during WWII, which shaped much of her life. At one point during the war, her town was ordered to abandon their homes, but Marieke's family refused. They boarded up their windows and hid in their home. Cold and hungry, Marieke and her father would often ride their bicycles into the countryside in search of firewood or food. When they were gone for several days, they slept in barns. This was the cloth she was cut from. This was our Marieke.

Her original name was Maria, but she wanted a name with more pizzazz. So, when she turned 18, she officially changed her name to Marieke.

Because Marieke's father fought with the US during WWI, the family was granted dual citizenship with one caveat. The children would have to renounce their Dutch citizenship, by immigrating to America, before their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. And, so in early May 1950, 20-year-old Marieke came alone to New York with the allowed \$80 in US currency. Life in NYC proved very difficult and she soon joined her older brother in the Detroit area.

Marieke was always so thankful for the brave allies who liberated her from the Nazis. In 1952, she completed studies at Wayne State University in Occupational Therapy. This was a new area of study that combined art and medicine, targeted at helping injured veterans.

Marieke married Lee Allen in 1954. They had five children. At the time of her death, she had 11 grandchildren and 6 great grand-children.

Marieke's love of gardening was also a driving force in her life. She was a member of Deeplands Garden Club and the Grosse Pointe Garden Center, where she served as its Board of Trustees President in 2009. When, in 2007, the idea of transforming a forgotten hillside garden at the War Memorial into a Veterans Garden was presented, Marieke eagerly joined the crusade by forming and chairing the Veterans Garden Committee. By 2011, two Advanced Master Gardeners had re-designed and renovated the garden and on Veterans Day, 11-11-12, the garden was dedicated to our veterans. Seeing the garden become the 'Veterans Garden' was Marieke's way of expressing her gratitude for the allies who liberated her homeland.



A granite plaque has been installed in the garden honoring the garden's founders; Lynn Lutomski-Kiley, Mary M. Northcut and Marieke A. Allen. Please visit the garden as the seasons change from the welcoming of spring with over 1200 flower bulbs to the brilliant colors of summer and then the subdued hues of fall.

Marieke was an inspiration to all who knew her. She will be missed.

Alaine Bush, Veterans Garden Committee