

Marlys Ruth (Anderson) Thornton, a beloved wife, mother, grandmother, and co-founder of Marick Refrigeration, peacefully passed away on April 6, 2024.

Marlys was born on April 25, 1936 in Northern Iowa to Christine (Sunde) and Clifford Anderson. Growing up on the farm alongside her sister Joan and brother Wayne, Marlys developed a close bond with her siblings. Embracing her tomboy nature, she reveled in the joys of hard work, adventure, and mischief, often leading her siblings into fun-filled escapades. These formative years instilled in Marlys enduring values of hard work, appreciation of nature, boundless imagination, and a strong sense of family, which guided her throughout her life.

After graduating from Williams High School, Marlys attended a local dance party and met a young man named Richard Thornton. Within a few months, Marlys and Richard were married and they enjoyed 64 wonderful years together. Marlys and Dick were blessed with four children: Mark (Jan), Dawn (Randy), Rick and Amy (Chad). Over the years, their family expanded to include 9 grandchildren: Danielle, Michelle, Sara, Marlyssa, Dylan, Brian, Lindsay, Calvin, and Elle, as well as six great-grandchildren: Addie, Ava, Adrien, Saetia, Nash, and Ford. Marlys cherished every moment spent with her children and grandchildren.

From 1967-1984 Marlys worked for House of Decorative Accessories (HODA), starting as a salesperson, and rising to become a District and then Regional Sales Manager. HODA provided the perfect environment for her to demonstrate her creativity, design skills, and business leadership. She cherished the friendships she made at HODA and loved helping other women reach their goals. As a salesperson, Marlys won multiple award trips, including some that sent Marlys and Dick overseas. This sparked their love of travel, which would become one of their favorite pastimes and create a lifetime of adventures and memories.

Marlys and Dick were a great team. While she grew her career at HODA, Marlys supported the family enabling Dick to realize his dream of founding Marick Refrigeration. When she joined Marick full-time in 1984, Marlys played an integral role alongside Dick and their sons Mark and Rick in shaping the company into a leading provider of commercial refrigeration.

In 1997, Marlys and Dick embraced retirement in Las Vegas, where they experienced great joy entertaining family and friends. After 20 years in Las Vegas, they moved back to Iowa to be closer to children and grandchildren. Richard passed away last May. Marlys missed him dearly, and we find comfort in knowing they are reunited once again.

Marlys's legacy of love, joy, adventure, and family will forever live on in the hearts of those who were blessed to know her.

Services will be held at Hamilton's, 3601 Westown Parkway, West Des Moines, IA on Wednesday, April 10, 2024 with visitation from 11:30 am-1:30 pm and the service at 1:30 pm.