



Jean L. Chesley

June 23, 1925 - March 13, 2023

Peabody, MA – Jean L. Chesley, age 97, a former and longtime resident of Haverhill passed away March 13, 2023 at Brooksby Village, Peabody, MA, her home community for the past seventeen years.

Born June 23, 1925 in Haverhill, she was one of four daughters to the late Paul and Lucy (Maclver) Gray. She shared 67 years of marriage with her late husband Charles E. Chesley.

Jean graduated from Haverhill High School with the Class of 1943 and Pierce Secretarial School in Boston in 1944. Early in her career, Jean was employed as an executive secretary at Western Electric in Haverhill. Family was always considered her highest priority and she became a stay-at-home mom while her two sons were young and then enjoyed traveling widely to stay connected with her growing family.

Jean was a proud and dedicated citizen of Haverhill and was active in the supporting community as a volunteer at the Haverhill Historical Society; as a member and past president of the Haverhill Arts and Crafts Society; the Winnekenni Castle Foundation; and as a past President and thirty-year Board Member of Bethany Homes, Inc. She was recognized by the Haverhill Historical Society and Bethany Inc. for her dedicated service.

Jean shared several honors with Charlie, including the B'nai B'rith Distinguished Service Award; the Greater Haverhill Chamber of Commerce Community Leadership Award; as well as, recognition by the Haverhill Historical Society and Winnekenni Castle Foundation for their leadership in restoration projects at "The Castle" and from the Mayor and City Council of Haverhill for countless acts of community service.

Surviving family members include two sons, Wayne Chesley and his wife, Charlene, of Springfield, VA. Their children Kevin, his wife Heather and their daughter Lucy of Burbank, CA; Kristin Dunaway, husband Tom and their children, Vivian, Charles and Graham of Alexandria, Virginia; and Katie of Austin Tx. Glenn Chesley and his wife Maureen of Danvers, and their son, Matthew of Austin Tx. She is also survived by her sister Peg Young of Moultonborough, NH, and numerous nieces and nephews.

She was also predeceased by her siblings, Ruth Butcher and Elinor Spofford.

Private services will be held in the Linwood Cemetery, Haverhill, MA. A Memorial Service will be held at the Brooksby Village Chapel at 12:00 on 25 March. A Celebration of Life luncheon will follow.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Haverhill Historical Society, 240 Water Street, Haverhill, MA 01831, Bethany Homes Inc., 10 Phoenix Row, Haverhill, MA 01832 or the Benevolent Care Fund at Brooksby Village, 100 Brooksby Village Drive, Peabody, MA 01960.

Cemetery Details

Linwood Cemetery

41 John Ward Ave.
Haverhill, MA 01830

Previous Events

Memorial Service

MAR 25. 12:00 PM (ET)

Brooksby Village Chapel
100 Brooksby Village Drive
Peabody, MA 01960

Tribute Wall

JE

“ My mother and father were very fond of the Chesleys, so much so that they named me after Jean. When I read Charlie's obituary, I was immediately reminded of being enthralled with his old furniture store where my father often brought me, but no reminder was needed of how I could spend hours poking around the antiques in their barn. Like others, I remember the cookies too, 😊, and what seemed like a ginormous backyard...with a basketball court? Their boys seemed like beanpoles to me back then in the early 70s.

I took my hub of 31 years on a Sunday drive through Riverside last Sunday. A few formative, young childhood years were spent on Whittier St, and we boarded horses at a stable down on E. Broadway, so of course I sought out their old homestead. To the person who bumped into the hutch, I think I, too, broke something once while Jean was taking care of my sister and me. Off to the box of blocks I was sent. ☐

*Jean (Hillner) Eno
Greenland, NH*



Jean Eno - October 12, 2024 at 09:25 AM

SR

“ To the Chesley family I want to express my sincere condolences for your loss of Jean. Jean was one of the sweetest people I have ever known. I always looked forward to seeing her and Charlie whenever I delivered their mail. I enjoyed being not only their mailman for over 20 years but also an East Broadway neighbor. I looked forward to the many days that Jean would meet me at the door with her delicious freshly baked cookies and muffins. She would even put them in a plastic bag and hang them from the mailbox for me whenever her and Charlie weren't home. I would sit in front of the Halls house and enjoy them with a coffee for lunch! What great memories I will always have of Jean and Charlie. They were very special customers and friends to me. I'm so glad to have known them. Rest in peace Jean. Riverside was very lucky to have you and Charlie!

Steve Raymond

Steven Raymond - April 11, 2023 at 11:23 PM

“Mrs. Chesley was always someone special to all of us. First time I met her and went to the house, 1968, she wanted to give me a hug and I backed off and bumped into the hutch. A dish fell and it put a dent in the wood, and she was amazed at my shyness, me. You were always welcomed into the Chesley home whether the boys were there or not, even if you were in the neighborhood and just wanted to stop by to say HI.

!973 I bought a brand new 1973 Plymouth Barracuda, red with black side stripe, with white leather interior, went by the house to show off my new car to the Chesley's. I worked and bought it at McGregor-Smith right by the Chesley homestead.

I would stop by every so often after the boys went away to school to visit and say hi to Mr. and Mrs. When I came by a couple of weeks after the car visit, Mrs. Chesley had made a present for me. Red and white terry cloth seat covers for my front bucket seats. She made them from seeing the car the first time and she said someone like me shouldn't have white leather seats so she handmade the seat covers for me to protect them. I am still amazed and grateful today.

Getting back to the hutch story, I had a wonderful phone conversation with her back weeks ago, we haven't seen or talked since they moved away. One of the first comments was her story of the hutch and the dent in the wood from 1968!! She enjoyed it and the memory, as I was blown away that 54 years later, she remembered it and it meant something to her. I thoroughly enjoyed that long phone conversation with her.

You could never and I mean never put anything by her, she was sharp and couldn't be fooled. You could tell she cared about you and your family at all times.

While they were still in Riverside and you bumped into them, they would always ask about everyone in your family and really wanted to know. Seeing Charlie getting a sub in Charlie's Variety (Hannah's Market) and going home to split it with Smokey.

Two of the most wonderful people I have ever known, and I thank Wayne and Glenn for sharing them with us.

My condolences to the Chesley family and extensions. May she RIP! She will always be remembered by those of us that had the pleasure to know her.

Milton Taylor

Milton Taylor - March 26, 2023 at 03:02 PM

BC

“ *Aunt Jean was one in a million. A true matriarch and loved by so many. She always wanted to know about everything in my life- words of encouragement when I struggled and celebration when things were great. I was honored to have her at my wedding. She hugged me and told me nana and Gramp were watching and so proud of what a beautiful bride I was. It was a cherished memory. She also was one hell of a four leaf clover finder! She could glance at a patch of clovers and pull one out in no time. Cherished memory of the lake house!*

Brooke Cote - March 25, 2023 at 03:28 PM

KC

“ *Being her grandson is one of the greatest Godsend of my life. Such a wonderful, kind, incredible woman. She carried a strength in her that was only matched by her generosity. Curious about everything - so supportive and encouraging. Hers was a life very well lived and she was an awesome example of how to be there for your family. I love you, Gram.*

Kevin Chesley - March 20, 2023 at 04:41 PM

DC

“ Aunt Jean was an inspiration to me. Living in Florida, we spoke on the phone over the years. My dad Winslow (one of Charlie's brothers) and I visited a few times. Aunt Jean always asked about every family member & how they were doing. She would send photos & cards.

I think every person she has met was touched in some way by her kindness. She made people feel loved & special. I will see you again. Love, your niece, Denise Chesley



Denise C - March 16, 2023 at 09:45 PM

BJ

“ Remember fondly growing up and always being welcomed in your home. Chesley/Johnson Thanksgivings, Christmases, and Easters. Visiting overnight with adventures to the fire station or the bargain house, or just fun games at home. You, Uncle Charlie, Wayne, and Glenn are all precious to me, and will always be with me.
Nephew Bruce

Bruce Johnson - March 16, 2023 at 07:12 PM

WC

“ Mom, you and Dad travelled to every duty station to which I was assigned. You were always connected to my family despite being separated by distance (Hawaii, California, Scotland...)! We always felt your love and support. You have been an immeasurable blessing to Charlene and me, your grandchildren and great grandchildren. You will be greatly missed, but you will always have a place in our hearts.



Wayne Chesley - March 15, 2023 at 05:27 PM