

Mom was passionate about a lot of things including but not limited to family, public education, charitable giving, hand written thank you notes, and travel.

She held a lot of leadership positions during her life. But I think the job she loved most was solving the puzzle of a great trip. She handled the logistics of where, when, what, and how long before the internet or GPS. To her, that wasn't a chore. It was a grand challenge that she embraced with relish.

Mom was frugal beyond measure in daily life but was willing to splurge for adventure. She wanted experiences that allowed her and Dad, and sometimes all of us to immerse ourselves in culture, revel in nature, and connect deeply with people. Their adventures always had a healthy dose of physical challenge. But to Mom, those challenges just made her appreciate the hot shower, a lovely room, or an ice cream sundae at the end even more.

Her international travels started with a bang. Her very first excursion was on a military transport plane traveling to Japan at seven months pregnant to have her first child. Who does that?!

It was a number of years before they traveled overseas again, but once that gate was open, they were unstoppable.

In 1981, they made their first trip to the Himalaya. Three and a half weeks of strenuous hiking and camping culminated in standing, dwarfed, at the base of the Everest Ice Fall at almost 18,000 feet. It was life-altering. The very next year, I dropped them off at the airport in hiking boots and carrying matching red, framed backpacks heading to hike in the Alps. They loved the Swiss countryside so much they eventually took the whole family back for their 40th wedding anniversary to revisit Lauterbrunnen, Grindelwald and the Jungfrau Joch.

In 1989, they added cycling to the mix. They pedaled through the Loire, Dordogne, and Bordeaux regions of France—loving the hospitality of rural villages, the spectacle of fabulous chateaus, fantastic wine and great food. They returned to France to explore Brittany and Normandy, visiting the historic World War II sites - on bicycles.

Even as they got older, they didn't slow down. Mom and Dad returned to Nepal at age 60 for a rugged 25-day trek around Dhaulagiri. They bathed in freezing glacier melt for three weeks until they finally got a single warm shower. Mom loved telling the story of the Sherpas holding her hands to help her across a terrifying, narrow log bridge. They crossed two 17,000-foot passes and did several 5,000' ascents. She was never deterred.

At 72, they decided to ride their bikes from Denver to Oxford, Ohio, for their 50th college reunion, because apparently driving would have been too easy. The 1,217-mile trip had its peaceful stretches, along with what Mom remembered as hundreds of dives into roadside ditches to make room for passing semi-trucks and RVs. That number may have been embellished a bit, but the accomplishment was not. They made it all the way back to their alma mater, and unlike their honeymoon, they arrived without a single flat tire.

Mom's absolute favorite pastime was sitting down with anyone who wanted to share travel stories.

She would tell you about Alaska—not from a massive cruise ship, but from a tiny boat with twelve people sharing one single bathroom. She loved being completely unplugged, kayaking past calving glaciers, watching humpback whales, cuddling future Iditarod husky puppies, and spotting a rare wolf in the tundra. They marveled at seeing stunning Denali from a small plane, feeling like soaring eagles.

She would tell you about Antarctica. She admired the sheer beauty of massive glaciers and towering icebergs, the up-close encounters with thousands of nonchalant penguins, and visiting the grave of her hero, Ernest Shackleton.

And, there was an unforgettable excursion to get up close and personal with the polar bears in Churchill, Manitoba.

For their 50th anniversary, they tackled Patagonia and the Andes. And over the years, they checked off China, Egypt, Greece, Easter Island, Machu Picchu, and a favorite, Norway. They even met our family for a camping safari in southern Africa. My favorite memory is watching Mom and Dad in total giggles sitting in the back of a safari truck with their 11- and 12-year-old grandkids.

For her 90th birthday Mom made a trip with the whole family to Mexico. There was a perfect mix of sunshine, great food, plenty of margaritas, competitive game playing and even a paddleboard adventure across a tidal inlet to get to the beach. Thank you Ryan.

Last fall, Mom and I were discussing an interview with Jane Goodall regarding her thoughts on mortality. When asked about the future, Goodall noted that there are only two possibilities when we die: either nothing exists, or, there IS something.

Mom was on board with Jane: "If something exists... I can't think of a greater adventure than finding out what it is."

Well, Mom. I hope it is the grandest adventure of your long, bold, and amazing life. And we are all taking comfort in trusting you are back together with the absolute love of your life, Daddy.

We love you, Mom. Happy trails.