



## Grace Spevak

November 14, 2022

The life of Grace Spevak was celebrated Saturday evening ?? her sons Jeff and Bruce, and her daughters-in-law Margaret and Eileen ?? with a toast featuring her favorite cocktail. The Brandy Alexander: brandy, crème de cacao, and fresh cream. Halfway across the country, in Colorado, Grace's granddaughter Bryden and husband Brian did the same. Grace had passed away on November 12, 2022, that morning two weeks after having suffered a stroke in her assisted-living apartment in Berea, Ohio. She was 92 years old. Grace Valek was born on Nov. 29, 1929, in Cleveland, Ohio. She was a graduate of John Adams High School and Cleveland Engineering Institute. She was doing engineering drafting work for the East Ohio Gas Company when she met Edward Spevak, a graduate of Bedford High School, and draftsman for the E.F. Hauserman construction company. Before she married, Grace traveled. She went to pre-Castro Cuba. She sailed to Europe on the finest luxury liner of the day, the United States, and sometimes told the story of how a man tried to pick her up while on the ship; she said he backed off when she burst into tears. Much later in life, Grace traveled by herself on Amtrak from Cleveland to Idaho to visit Jeff and Margaret. In retirement, she and Ed made many driving trips around the country, including a visit to the Arizona winter home of Margaret's parents, Dick and Helen Rattray; the two couples enjoyed each other's company. Grace and Ed also went to Mexico, hitting the Acapulco beaches, and even attending a bullfight. It was a low-budget event, Grace talked about how the stadium crew used a VW Bug to

drag away the dead bull.???Grace held a few different jobs over the years. She was a teaching assistant at Macedonia Elementary School and took course work to be a realtor. She worked at a Mr. Coffee manufacturing plant. But as was so often the case then, more than a half-century ago, Grace surrendered her drafting career and her travel yearnings to raising her two young sons. She fed them breaded pork chops, drove them to their baseball games and learned homemaking tricks by watching the Dinah Shore talk show, "Dinah!"?Grace and her husband built a handful of new homes as they moved about Northeastern Ohio over the years. Two houses in Northfield, followed by a move to a condo in Cuyahoga Falls. And then another home in Penfield, a farming community west of Akron, although they were only casual gardeners themselves. They also built a home in Englewood, Fla., which they shared for a few years with Ed's mother, Anna Spevak, and his sister, also named Grace. Grace Spevak had some surprising, wide-ranging interests. She had an artistic flair, especially when it came to decorating Christmas cards with extra glitter. She was on a bowling team for a few years. She loved the music of Elton John, and persuaded her son Jeff, who was then a high-school senior, to take her to one of his concerts at the Richfield Coliseum. "Only if you don't tell my friends," he said. During the show she asked, "What's that smell?" That was her introduction to marijuana. She was a reader. For years, Grace's bookshelves held dusty copies of Shakespeare's plays, although she had long since moved on to Kitty Kelley's gossipy celebrity biographies. After Ed died in 2011, a few years later she moved into her assisted-living apartment and would fall asleep at night while listening to Art Bell's "Coast To Coast AM" talk show, which frequently featured pseudoscience experts discussing UFOs, bigfoot, ghosts and conspiracy theories. Did she believe any of that? Not that she would admit it, although Grace left the impression that she hoped some of this were true. The one paranormal subject to which she did lend some credibility was something she first heard of on Bell's show. The 1959 mystery of Dyatlov Pass, when nine cross-country skiers in Russia's Ural Mountains were found dead in mysterious circumstances. "Dead

Mountain: The Untold True Story of the Dyatlov Pass Incident" was the last book she read. Grace stopped reading because her advancing glaucoma had made it too difficult. Early on, Jeff asked her ?? he might have been joking ?? if smoking pot might be a solution, as some research had suggested. He said he could hook her up with "a friend of a friend of a friend of a friend??" She declined. By then, Charles Bonnet Syndrome was setting in. The brains of people who are losing their vision need an outlet, and they begin experiencing occasional hallucinations. Grace was seeing cars coming up her driveway, and people dressed in vintage clothes coming into the house. Twin little girls were in the living room. The walls of her bedroom looked like they were comprised of huge boulders. From her front window, in the summertime, Grace could see a tall, snow-covered mountain, with skiers. She ignored it all, and went to bed. Grace ignored all of her body's failings. She just kept going, welcoming visits by her sons, granddaughter and their dogs. All while pretending she could see, blaming a wrong eyeglasses prescription. Just a few weeks ago, Bruce recorded a video of Grace answering his questions in a lucid manner, with just a few deviations from reality. The next night, she had her stroke. Lying in a hospital bed, unable to move, almost completely blind, she could still hear well. She turned her head toward whoever was speaking. But Grace had left implicit instructions that no artificial means of keeping her alive were to be used. She went into hospice. She was unhooked from the machines. Morphine kept the pain under control. She faded, then passed away. Grace was preceded in death by her sisters, Pearl Kersulis and Joy LePelley, and her brother Joe Valek. Her one remaining sibling, the youngest, Robbie Valek, has been lost to Alzheimer's for more than a decade. She is remembered by her sons, Jeff (Margaret) Spevak and Bruce (Eileen) Spevak, granddaughter Bryden (Brian Curtin) Spevak, great granddaughter Cleo June Spevak, many nieces and nephews, and other family. No services or funeral are planned. Grace had simply asked that her ashes be scattered on a warm beach. The family will do so.