



# Leona W. Smith

JUL 26, 1927 - MAR 13, 2024



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## **Leona W. Smith**

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### **L**eona Smith Obituary

Leona “Lee” Smith, at the age of 96, passed away peacefully March 13, 2024. She led an incredible life that began July 26, 1927 from modest roots in North Creek, Ohio, a small farm village founded by her grandfather, an immigrant from Germany. She bravely left the farm and crafted a life story in which she saw many corners of the world, ran a successful business with her husband of more than 64 years, thrived for more than 25 years following major heart surgery, and immersed herself in her family and church.

Lee was known for her strong and independent nature that was forged by facing adult-size challenges as a child. She lost her mother at age 3. Her father, a farmer, lost much of their property during the Great Depression. Her education took place in a one-room school house with a coal-burning stove and no running water.

The outbreak of World War II set Lee’s life on a course that she never could have imagined as a child. She went to the Air Technical Service Command at Wright Field to prepare to be a stenographer. Three days before graduation, the war ended. Rather than returning to the farm, she moved in with an aunt in Toledo, Ohio and worked as a teletype operator. And then, Lee met the love of her life, Charlie Smith at a YMCA dance. At the time, Charlie was an assistant golf pro at the famous Inverness Club in Toledo.

Lee and Charlie were married in 1956 and forged an incredible partnership of love and personal growth, a partnership that was tested early as they dealt with the death of a child at birth. They led a nomadic life following the sun for several years on the PGA golf tour and in 1959, settled in Elyria where Charlie served as the head pro at Spring Valley Country Club (now known as Valley of the Eagles) while Lee focused on being an attentive mother of two, Dan born in 1957 and Diane born in 1962. In 1965, they purchased Forest Hills Golf Club along with two of their friends. Lee and Charlie worked side-by-side building the course from 9 to 18 holes and weathered



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devastating financial circumstances brought on by a severe flood in 1969. In 1975, after 10 years of working days, nights and weekends, good fortune smiled on Lee and Charlie; they sold the course to the Lorain County Park District and enjoyed a “semi-retired” life including winters in Florida.

Later in life, Lee and Charlie took to the road again, but this time for leisurely travels across the country. Of these, she was captivated by the diversity and energy of New York City. Against the better judgment of all who were with her, Lee would routinely strike up conversations with strangers on the subways and sidewalks. On her last visit, it took multiple family members to pry her out of Times Square around midnight.

Lee lived a life a great faith. A highpoint was a trip she and Charlie took to Israel to visit the sacred sights described in the Bible; it was life changing for her. In her later years, her faith kept her grounded and gave her strength as she spent most of her time at home caring for Charlie as dementia robbed him of memories of her and the life story they created together.

Friends will be received Monday, March 18, 2024 from 11:00 am until the time of a 1:00 pm service at First United Methodist Church, 312 Third Street, Elyria with Reverend Tennille Power officiating.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the church.

To send flowers  
to the family or plant a tree  
in memory of Leona W. Smith, please visit our floral store.

[Read More](#)



## Tribute Wall

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BR

**Betty Raber** posted:

My prayers are with the family. Diane was one of our babysitter.s, and I was in a church circle with Lee. Fond memories!

March 28 at 4:30 AM

DJ

**Dan And Jonlee** posted:

Claire and Chuck - thank you so much for your kind words! We miss seeing you whenever we visit. Leona was always grateful for your friendship!

March 18 at 11:47 AM

CC

**Claire And Chuck** posted:

Loved her. Best friend ever. Love to Diane and family and Dan and family. Loved her stories.

March 18 at 5:08 AM



# Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Leona by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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