



Vera Zurbrugg Spear

October 4, 2025

Vera Louise Zurbrugg Spear, 99, of Monroeville, formerly of Pleasant Hills, died October

4, 2025, surrounded by her family. Her vitality, good humor, and keen mind remained

with her, even in her final days.

She is survived by her children, Pamela S. Price (Robert) of Monroeville, Theodore J.

Spear (Kim) of White Oak, and Jennifer S. Harp (Steven) of Slippery Rock and State

College, PA; grandchildren, Jeffrey R. Price (Tracey), Matthew Harp (Janice), and Erica

H. Oman (Ian); great-grandchildren, Ashley P. James (Isaiah), Delaney and Addison

Price, Wesley and Isabel Oman; Reggie and John Lin Harp; and great-great grandson,

Maison James. She also leaves behind her cherished nieces and nephews and their

families, all of whose lives she followed with love and delight.

Born Vera Louise Zurbrugg in Sebring, Ohio, she entered the Army Nurse Cadet

Training Corps in preparation for service in WWII, earning her diploma as a registered

nurse at The Alliance City Hospital in Alliance, OH in 1947. The war had concluded by her graduation, so she began her professional life with a classmate and moved to Cleveland, Ohio to work at University Hospitals. It was in Cleveland that she met the love of her life, John Mackenzie Spear, a dashing WWII pilot, who was an engineering student at Case Western Reserve University, whom she married in 1948, and who preceded her in death in 2016. Also preceding her in death is her mother, Clea McCausland Zurbrugg, her father, Homer Arthur Zurbrugg, and her beloved siblings, Helen Z. Kandel, Dorothy Z. Wafler, Mildred Z Lutton Rohr, Kenneth H. Zurbrugg, and Ralph E. Zurbrugg, all of Ohio. Her precious granddaughter, Amanda Jane Price, also preceded her in death in 1997. Vera Spear was known professionally as a dedicated, skilled and compassionate nurse. She practiced hospital nursing while her children were young and furthered her education, earning her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree at the University of Pittsburgh in 1975. This led to her professional passion, the field of Public Health, where she practiced as a leading public health nurse in both Allegheny County and Bonneville County, Idaho. In her role as a public health nurse, she organized and

directed immunization clinics for the public, and intervened to improve the health status of at-risk mothers and babies through WIC clinics and home visits to those needing her expertise and advocacy in particularly difficult situations. In recent times, she was vocal in her support for science, and for the vulnerable and unrepresented groups that public health practice seeks to support, voicing her displeasure with recent national policies she saw as undermining immunizations and the promotion of health care for all. Vera's adventurous life led her to Idaho Falls, Idaho, with husband, John, for four years on his working assignment with the DOE in 1977. Prior to that, she was involved in many activities in Pleasant Hills, including the Pleasant Hills Women's Club, the Order of Eastern Star, and membership in the Pleasant Hills Community United Presbyterian Church. Returning from Idaho in 1981, she and John retired to Monroeville and frequently traveled for duplicate bridge tournaments, square dancing competitions, and WWII Army Air Corps reunions. Vera was an accomplished bridge player, her skill feared by many an opponent. She achieved the rank of Bronze Life Master in the American Contract Bridge League. She was also a member of the American Association of University Women, an AAUW literature group, and an avid reader in

general. She was one to read the Pittsburgh Post Gazette from cover to cover with unflinching attention to detail. Vera was also a member of the Cross Roads Presbyterian Church and enjoyed many concerts and theater events in her later years. She also enjoyed live sporting events, following Pitt football and basketball, and competitive tennis without fail. At home, she enjoyed old movies, and was an expert on the film classics and their performers.

Vera was known for her beauty, wit, curiosity, and interest in people. She had a fascination with current events and their implications. She was heralded for her pies and perfect pie crust, as well as a crowd-pleasing potato salad, which could not be duplicated. She begrudgingly shared her secret ingredients with her daughters in later years. Most of all, she enjoyed her family and followed their life events closely. She delighted in her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, appreciating their pure and profound views of the world, a world she loved and hated to leave, even as she knew her years on earth were coming to an end. Vera's absence leaves us with an empty place in our hearts, and an aching in our souls— for her, for her unique energy, and for her way in this complex and beautiful world.

A private memorial service will be held at Crossroads Presbyterian Church in Monroeville in November 2025 with burial at The Plum Creek Cemetery in

Plum.

Funeral arrangements coordinated by Gene H. Corl Funeral Chapel in
Monroeville.

Memorial contributions may be made in Vera's memory to The Amanda Jane
Price

Scholarship Fund or to The University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing.

Condolences may be made at www.corlfuneralchapel.com.

Tribute Wall

CM

“ Vera lead a very special life, full of dedication, adventure, joy and a very special love for her family. I had only recently met Vera, but I loved to hear Pam talk about her mother and to see her eyes light up recalling some of the memories of her mother’s adventures. I wish that I had learned to play bridge, because it would have fun to play with her and Bob. They would have been formidable opponents!!! Sending my condolences to Pam and Bob, but it is a comfort to know that she is at peace. With love, Celeste Massaro
Talk

Celeste Massaro - November 07, 2025 at 01:17 PM

LI

“ Hello. I worked for Vera and John for 20 years, as she said. She was a lovely lady to work for, always wanted to talk before I would start. So honored to work for her, I cleaned her house, and many other things too. She loved her family always talked about them, always asked about mine. It feels very funny for her not to be here any more, such a important person to me. Is missed. Mom always asked me, who Vera was, I told her shes the lady, and John, who came to dads funeral. which is how they were.

linda - November 06, 2025 at 10:36 PM

LS

“ Heartfelt sympathy to Bob, bridge partner extraordinaire and terrific son-in-law, and Vera’s family from Leslie and Jan Swensen of the Friday bridge game.

Leslie Swensen - November 05, 2025 at 09:39 PM

TS

“ Aunt Vera was a very special person to me my whole life. She always took a special interest in me and my family with Judy. She was so much to be with. She had a twinkle in her eyes that was so welcoming.

I know she's up there in heaven enjoying a game of bridge with her love, Uncle John. What a team they must be!

Tom Spear(Tommy) - November 05, 2025 at 05:11 PM

MJ

“ Vera was a very special lady whose legacy lives on in such a beautiful family. May you see her each time you look upon each other's faces and may the God who welcomes her home comfort you all as you morn her loss. Much love Martha Johns

Martha Johns - November 04, 2025 at 06:55 PM

CB

“ What a wonderful life she lead! I'm hoping to hear about the secret to her pie crusts & potato salad - 2 things I've never mastered!! While her loss leaves you all mourning, she lives on in all of her family - what a wonderful legacy! May warm memories sustain you at this dtime of deep loss.

Cindy & Steve Brylinsky - November 04, 2025 at 05:23 PM

CS

“ What an amazing woman! I truly enjoyed what little time I got to spend with her. We enjoyed sharing stories from our nursing profession. Heaven has received a true angel 🙏
Condolences to Pam, Bob and family. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to meet your precious, special mother. Cheryl and Bob Shanes

Cheryl Shanes - November 04, 2025 at 03:54 PM

JT

I did not know Vera but I know her daughter Pam. She must have been a wonderful mother because Pam is a wonderful person. I pray the family will ease in their sorrow but always remember the best things about Vera.

Jane Tortorice

Jane Tortorice - November 06, 2025 at 07:37 AM

CH

Vera was a wonderful loving woman who will be missed by her family and friends. She loved her grandchildren and enjoyed and shared in their accomplishments. She was even kind to Amanda's friends by watching them all for a week so they could participate in sailing camp in Ohio. Our children had the surprise benefit that week by learning how to play bridge! She told us that being a grandmother was a gift in that she enjoyed her grandchildren but also shared in the joy she saw in her daughter in raising those children. But being a grandmother was extremely difficult with the loss of Amanda, because she not only suffered the loss of her granddaughter but shared the extreme loss her daughter experienced. Vera shared in the hearts of her whole family and will be missed by all.

Carmen Grosse Hoecker - November 13, 2025 at 04:32 PM