



## Mrs. Margaret Denton "Bunny" Lanning

October 2, 1943 - May 7, 2020

Margaret Joan (Bunny) Denton Lanning

Bunny Lanning was born in Newport Rhode Island on Oct. 2, 1943, to Thomas and Margaret Gibney Denton. From her mother she learned to cherish family traditions; from her father she got her nickname and his love of his native England. When she was 14, Tom and Peg gave her a Doberman Pinscher named Raksha to keep her safe on her solitary forays into the woods surrounding Oak Ridge, TN, where she grew up.

Bunny had wanted to become a veterinarian, but women weren't allowed into vet schools in the early '60s. She graduated from the University of Tennessee with a degree in philosophy and married Adam B. Lanning, III, professor of sociology at Murray State University. Just as she supported his running 96 marathons and 93 triathlons, so did he support her passionate involvement in the breeding and training of Dobermans under her kennel name "Lothlorien."

The Doberman was originally bred as a guard dog, and Bunny believed in what the United Doberman Club calls the complete Doberman: a powerful working dog using its intelligence and drive.

She began training as a young girl with just her own good instinct. When she moved to Murray as a mother of five, she learned formal obedience training from Dr. Mary Adelman in the sport of Schutzhund (protection work) and expanded her competition training in AKC Conformation and Obedience. She was fortunate to have worked with Gene England, an internationally renowned Schutzhund competitor and instructor.

Over the years, she put multiple AKC Championships on a number of her Dobermans, then trained her Champions to herd and track, to compete in agility and obedience trials, pass difficult temperament tests such as the WAE and Breed Survey, and titled them to CDX or Utility Dog levels (the "Ph.D." of obedience tests), and even to become licensed as Therapy, Service, and Search Dogs. Bunny was a Doberman breeder highly regarded

for the health, longevity, beauty, and intelligence of the pups she produced. She competed at the local, regional, and national level and traveled internationally to observe and learn more about her beloved Doberman breed.

Bunny was a founding member and longtime board member of the United Doberman Club and served as president of that national organization. A lifetime member of the Doberman Pinscher Club of America, she supported its health and rescue efforts. She was also a member of the Paducah Kennel Club, Doberman Pinscher Club of Memphis, Doberman Pinscher Club of Nashville, and Mid-South Working Doberman Club, as well as being an officer in most. She was a licensed Temperament Tester for United Doberman Club and officiated at many local, regional, and national events.

A founding member of the local humane society's PAWS, Bunny took her Dobermans to visit the elderly in nursing homes and dressed them up in charming outfits complete with hats and silly stickers when she taught school kids and Cub Scouts how to handle dogs. She also taught obedience classes for the public in Murray in connection with the local shelter to help promote canine good citizenship.

Additional credentials on her Lothlorien-produced pups are guide dog for the hearing impaired, police dog, and cadaver dog. Bunny herself was a member of the Calloway County DES Rescue Squad. She was called out many times to search remote areas looking for missing persons, and remains discovered were used to help solve crimes.

Her husband used to joke that Bunny's champions had more degrees than all the rest of the family combined.

When her daughter Thais was 11, she put the third leg of a CD degree on Smaug, the grande dame of Bunny's Lothlorien Kennels. Her daughter Bayberry won Best Junior Handler at multiple Doberman nationals, and she and Rune qualified as a team to participate in the Westminster Dog Show in New York City.

Bunny was reserved, but she could bargain with the best of them over an antique quilt at a Kentucky country auction, which she'd restore and resell in the booth she ran in the antique mall on Murray's downtown square back in the '70s. Or for African artifacts in Nairobi marketplaces when her husband taught at Kenyatta University in the '80s.

But she had no sense of direction. Though she lived on 13th Street in the heart of Murray for more than 30 years, she had to think hard whether to go left or right each time she headed to the grocery store.

Yet she traveled widely, driving thousands of miles alone or with friends like Carma Cleveland to dog shows and training sessions, or searching for Neolithic grave sites and standing stones with her sister and her daughters in England and France, Scotland and Ireland.

She was the finest story teller in a family of story tellers, an avid reader with a wide range of interests, from Medieval history to Burpee's latest gardening catalogue.

Gift giver par excellence, she was generous to a fault. And who can imagine a Thanksgiving without her turkey gravy, or Christmas without her eggnog.

Bunny died on May 7, 2020. We are grateful for the dedication of her doctors and the staff of Vanderbilt's Ingram Cancer Center.

She was dearly loved by her late son, Adam B. Lanning, IV, and by her daughters, Ryland Lanning Bruhwiler (John), who shared her love of mystery and of trees; Thais Lanning Kelly (Sean), who was fortunate enough to live with and support her in recent years as well as her animals; Bayberry Lanning Shah (Atique), who explored art, history, and tea shops while traveling together in 18 countries; and her son, Dean Roberts Lanning (Danita), who connected with her on matters of philosophy.

Left to cherish her memory are her siblings, each a remarkable character in his or her own right: her sisters Leslie Denton Humphries (Robert), and Laurel Denton Owen (Robert), her brother Mark Slater Denton (Debbie), and her former sister-in-law, Nancy Bell Denton.

Her grandsons, Devon Thomas Harnett and Slater Timothy Harnett, along with her niece, Daphne, and her nephews, Chris, Marcus, Miles, Travis, Tyler, Troy, and Shane, will remember her whimsy: her love of Halloween and Star Wars trivia and the world of J.R.R. Tolkien. We deeply regret that Natalia Elizabeth Harnett and Ethan Thomas Harnett will never really get to know their great grandmother.

How we wish she could lead us on The Tour of her beloved flower gardens when her day lilies bloom. Share a cup of coffee at her kitchen table. Hear her voice.

The family asks that donations be made in Bunny's name to the Paducah Kennel Club, 1320 Fisher Rd., West Paducah, KY 42086.

Or to the Doberman Pinscher Club of America's Health Research and Rescue committee.

(More funding has gone into Doberman health research than any other breed, and the knowledge gained re. cancer and cardiomyopathy is applicable to humans.) Checks should be made to: DPCA. The notation on the check should be "Bunny Lanning." Send to: Linda Zaeske, 134 Daves View Dr., Kalama, WA 98625-9516.

# Comments

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“ Bunny and I were classmates of the 61 class at ORHS. We were friends in International Relations and English Literature. I remember her calm and thoughtful personality with everyone. RIP



**Sandra Blackwell Huntimer** - June 13 at 07:39 PM

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“ I only knew Bunny by her glorious reputation but Leslie Denton Humphries was a dear friend in Oak Ridge High School. Condolences to the family especially Leslie. Virginia Adams Harrow

**Virginia Assms Harrow** - June 13 at 10:54 AM