



## Lee Ann Kochenderfer

February 25, 1931 - May 31, 2026

It is with great sadness and deep gratitude for a life beautifully lived that we announce the passing of Lee Ann Kochenderfer.

Lee Ann was born on February 25, 1931, in Osborne, Kansas and passed on May 31, 2026 in Orange County, California. Through her work as a professor, author, business owner, military spouse, mother, and grandmother, she touched countless lives and left a legacy that will endure for generations.

Lee Ann was the beloved wife of Harold Devayne Kochenderfer Jr., who preceded her in death on July 10, 2011. Harold was a Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Air Force and served with distinction as an Adjutant and Atlas E missile crew commander. He was laid to rest with military honors at Riverside National Cemetery in 2011 and Lee Ann will be laid to rest beside him, reunited in eternal rest.

In addition to Lee Ann's life as a military spouse, she built a distinguished life and career in her own right. She earned a B.A. from Wichita State University, a M.A. from California State University, San Bernadino and a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from the University of California, Riverside.

She was a teacher at both the primary school and community college levels throughout her adult life. Prior to her retirement, she was an Associate Professor at Riverside City College where she developed one of the first Learning Disability Programs at the California Community Colleges and directed it for thirteen years. She also owned and operated a business, the Beeler Center, devoted to helping individuals with the learning disability

dyslexia. She worked to help these individuals overcome their learning challenges and discover pathways to success.

Lee Ann was also an avid writer. Her writing has appeared in newspapers, story collections, and literary and professional journals. Her middle-grade novel, *The Victory Garden*, Delacorte, 2002 received school library awards in Florida, Kansas, Missouri, Indiana and Virginia. She also published an adult novel, *The Tiger's Soul* in 2023.

Lee Ann embraced life with curiosity and enthusiasm. She was an avid reader whose love of books reflected the same values she shared with her students and family: curiosity, imagination, and lifelong learning. She found joy in ideas, stories, music, and meaningful conversation. She had many treasured friends and was a treasured friend to many. Those who knew her will remember her warmth, intelligence, creativity, quiet strength, and her remarkable ability to make others feel welcomed, valued, and encouraged.

Above all else, Lee Ann was devoted to her family. She was a loving mother, grandmother, mentor, and steadfast source of support. She took immense pride in the lives and accomplishments of her children and found great joy in her grandson.

Lee Ann is survived by her daughter, Kay Ellen Kochenderfer-Toomey, and son-in-law Francis ("Frank") Toomey; her daughter, Julie Ann Kochenderfer; her son, Harold Devayne Kochenderfer III; and her beloved grandson, Caleb Eichelberger.

Throughout her life, Lee Ann believed deeply in the transformative power of education and she devoted herself to empowering others through learning.

# Cemetery Details

## Riverside National Cemetery

22495 Van Buren Blvd  
Riverside, CA 92518

# Upcoming Events

## Burial

JUN 26. 1:00 PM (PT)

Riverside National Cemetery  
22495 Van Buren Blvd  
Riverside, CA 92518