



# Elaine Sites Lass

MAY 7, 1925 - JAN 31, 2014



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## **Elaine Sites Lass**

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# **E**laine Sites Lass

1 Corinthians 13:13 NKJV

And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Elaine Sites Lass was born May 7, 1925 in Clinton, Iowa, the daughter of Ruth Naomi Robertson Sites and John Harvey Sites, and younger sister of Dorothy Ruth Sites Carter and George Harvey Linn Sites. On January 31, 2014, she joined the heavenly choir, passing peacefully at home, following a brief illness.

Elaine's lifelong interests in music, writing, theatre, art, church, Girl Scouting, YWCA, and community service and leadership began at a young age as a student at Franklin Grade School, where she also formed many special lifelong friendships with children in her neighborhood, participated in Brownie and Junior Girl Scouts, Girl Reserves, YWCA, Sunday School, and piano and dancing lessons. In Washington Junior High School, Elaine was a drum majorette and was involved in Rainbow Girls, receiving the Grand Cross of Colors, Girl Scouts, YWCA, music, journalism, art, and drama. An active member of the Clinton High School Class of 1943, Elaine shared her talents as a feature writer for *The Clintonian* and the Annual yearbook and was elected to the Quill and Scroll National Journalism Society her junior year. In addition to Student Council membership and home room officer, she was elected to the Student Senate, served as secretary in the Executive Cabinet and earned leadership designations at various conferences. She was a member of the Latin Club, and served on prom, homecoming and Gateway Classics committees. As a member of Little Theatre, Elaine was an actor, student director and worked behind the scenes in Technical Club. Elaine's extensive participation in high school music included drum majorette, cellist in orchestra, A Cappella choir, glee club, girl's sextet, madrigal, festivals, concerts and variety shows. A First Class Girl Scout, Elaine was in the Mariner Scout Troop and served as co-chair of the combined Senior Girl Scout-Boy Scout Troop which collaborated on community



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service projects and World War II effort projects. Her devotion to church continued as a member of the choir, Sunday School pianist and orchestra member, a local and district office in the Methodist Youth Fellowship and served on the Council for Clear Lake State Methodist Summer Camp.

Following high school, Elaine worked full time and cared for her parents who were in ill health. After the death of her father in 1945, she volunteered with the USO at Schick Hospital, teaching rehabilitation walking and dancing to wounded patients, volunteered with the Red Cross with speaking engagements, helped serve meals at church for those drafted for service, arranged entertainment programs for bedridden and ambulatory patients, and participated in fund raising drives and other war effort programs.

As a student at Iowa State College, now Iowa State University, for two years, Elaine was a member of the Girls Glee Club, Iowa State Singers, an officer and activities chair of her dorm, wrote for the student newspaper, and participated in YWCA, church choir and other activities. Over the years, she took additional coursework at Clinton Community College, Iowa State University and the University of Iowa in speech, sociology and child development.

On November 15, 1947, Elaine married Douglas H. Lass in Clinton, and was an active partner in Doug's insurance and real estate business. He preceded her in death in 2003. Elaine and Doug have one daughter, Lanie Jean Lass, of Clinton. Elaine is also survived by several cousins, nieces and nephews, and great nieces and nephews across the country.

Church activities at the First United Methodist Church were an important part of Elaine's daily life, including organizing and directing the children's Cherub Choir for 30 years and singing with the adult Chancel Choir for 55 years. She was a Sunday School teacher and superintendent, confirmation class teacher, Methodist Youth Fellowship leader and chaperone, officer and member of United Methodist Women and church circles, church historian, Administrative Council member, assisted with special events, including the church 125th anniversary, author of church cookbooks, hostess of church suppers, and church publicity coordinator. Elaine was instrumental in helping organize children's choirs at other churches in the area, the Ecumenical Faith and Life series, and ecumenical services. In 1978, Elaine was honored by the United Methodist Women with a special life membership in honor of her continuing years of service.



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From 1961 to 1976, Elaine was owner and director of Jack and Jill Preschool in their home. She was a member of the Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children, serving on the state Board of Directors from 1966-1976 and as President for two years, publicity coordinator, state newsletter editor, attendee of fifteen state conferences, and organizer of four state conferences; the Midwest Association for the Education of Young Children, serving as MAEYC conference chairperson and key presenter in 1973, as well as delegate to seven MAEYC conferences; and the National Association for the Education of Young Children, serving as Iowa delegate to seven NAEYC national conferences and attendee at twelve national conferences. In 1966, Elaine was instrumental in establishing inservice training areas throughout Iowa for preschool teachers, aides and parents. In the early 1970s, Elaine traveled to Des Moines several times, a crucial time for developing standards for preschools and day care centers, and served on committees making recommendations to the Iowa State Legislature on licensing standards. Elaine met many children's television program hosts, such as Captain Kangaroo and Mr. Rogers, and judged the programs on a selected group of viewers. She continued for many years as a volunteer consultant in staff training for day care centers and preschools and led children's art classes in her home.

Elaine's commitment to education was exemplified through her dedicated involvement with PTA, beginning as Jefferson Elementary School officer and committee chair, served on City PTA committees, and as Jefferson PTA President in 1965-1966. From 1966-1967, Elaine served as City PTA President. She requested that instead of being given a past presidents pin, she asked for the funds to go towards chartering a bus to take representatives from every school PTA in Clinton to the district meeting in Cedar Rapids. In the early 1970s, she was actively involved in STAP, Students, Teachers and Parents at Clinton High School, which helped establish the groundwork for implementing programs and improving communication between school, parents, students and the community. A life membership in Iowa PTA was presented to Elaine by Jefferson PTA for her continuing interest and involvement in the concerns and interests of the organization and for activities involving all children and youth. Elaine was highly involved on the Clinton County Steering Committee for the International Year of the Child in 1979, and volunteered as a mentor in the after school program for many years. Elaine enjoyed supporting many activities at Clinton High School, including American Field Service, for which she edited a cookbook and served as publicity chair, and the music programs.

From 1959-1961, Elaine was an afternoon class teacher in the YWCA daycare center. In 1979, Elaine was honored as a YWCA Women of Action award recipient (now Women of Achievement)



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for her volunteer service to the YWCA and the community. Elaine has been a member of the YWCA for many years and served on various committees.

For over 60 years, Elaine has been a member of Beta Rho Chapter of Epsilon Sigma Alpha sorority, an international philanthropic and educational organization. Over the years, she served as chapter president and all other local offices, co-chaired two state conventions, served as state publicity director, newsletter editor and parliamentarian. Along with other chapter members, Elaine participated in many service and philanthropic projects and events, from the Clinton Centennial to fundraising for local and national organizations. For many years, she served as liaison and presenter of the Jean Hammer Lentz Memorial Music Scholarship to a student at Clinton High School, on behalf of the Lentz family and Epsilon Sigma Alpha sorority.

Elaine served as parliamentarian and legislative chair for many organizations, encouraging citizens to vote. She was an officer in the original League of Women Voters and missed very few opportunities to vote. Elaine considered it vital that each citizen use their right to vote as it is registering one's own personal opinion on a specific issue or candidate. She was also a member of the American Legion Auxiliary and helped raise money for veterans through the annual poppy drive on Memorial Day weekend.

Elaine's community service touched many people through several organizations, including service as United Way publicity chair and program coordinator, supporting the Felix Adler Children's Discovery Center, member and dinner hostess of the Clinton Boat Club, member and program presenter of the Clinton Women's Club and Cultural Department, volunteering as a Girl Scout troop leader for several years, and serving on the Girl Scout Council Board of Directors for three years, participating in strategic planning. She was a member of the Clinton County Historical Society and enjoyed visiting the museum and attending ice cream socials.

The arts were very important to Elaine, as she was a member of the Clinton Art Association, publicity director, doing Rastrelli's Grapevine announcements on KROS for several years, and gallery guide and artist coordinator for many years in the 1960s and 1970s. She also enjoyed singing in the community Messiah concerts. In the Humanities and Enrichment Program, Elaine was an art assistant in the schools. Elaine also supported the Clinton Area Showboat Theatre, the Clinton Community Concert Association, and the Clinton Symphony Orchestra, and enjoyed attending performances.



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As a member of the Visiting Nursing Association Board of Directors for 25 years, Elaine served on many committees, helped write the VNA bylaws and board manual.

Fraternal organizations were a large part of Elaine's life of service, whether doing table decorations for Masonic Boosters Breakfasts, supporting the Masonic Clothe-a-Child program, or traveling with her husband to Masonic and Shrine conventions, parades and meetings. As a member of Pyramid Temple of the Daughters of the Nile, and Clinton Sewing Circle, Elaine, along with other local members, sewed items for children in Shriners Hospitals.

Elaine's Scottish heritage as a member of the Clan Robertson was of special meaning to her throughout her life. As a member of the Scottish-American Society of the Quad Cities, Elaine designed table decorations for the annual Robert Burns dinners and enjoyed attending Kirkin' of the Tartan, Christmas parties and other organization activities.

Funeral Services will be 1:00pm, Wednesday, February 5, 2014 at the First United Methodist Church. Visitation will be from noon to the service time Wednesday at the church. Burial will follow at the Clinton Lawn Cemetery. Following the burial a light meal will served in the Webb Hall at the church. The Clinton Chapel Snell-Zornig Funeral Homes and Crematory is in charge of arrangements. Online condolences may be expressed by visiting her obituary at [www.snellzornig.com](http://www.snellzornig.com)

In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation to any of the organizations mentioned above or to an organization important to your heart in Elaine's honor and memory.

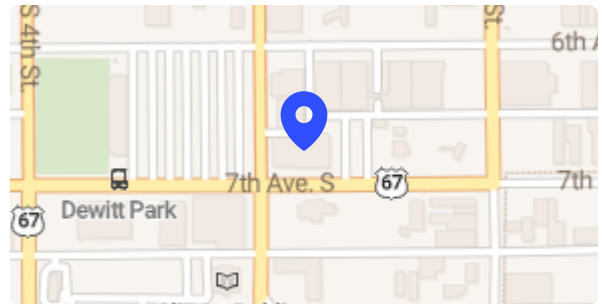


# Events

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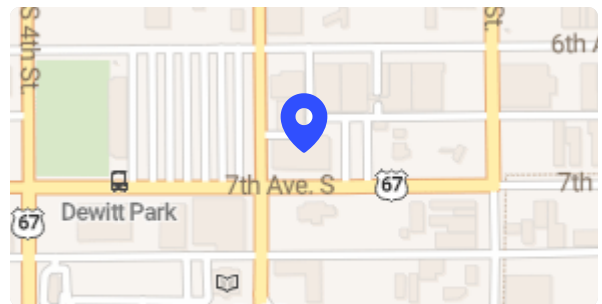
## Visitation

- Wednesday**, February 5, 2014
- 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM CT
- First United Methodist Church**  
621 South 3rd Street, Clinton IA 52732



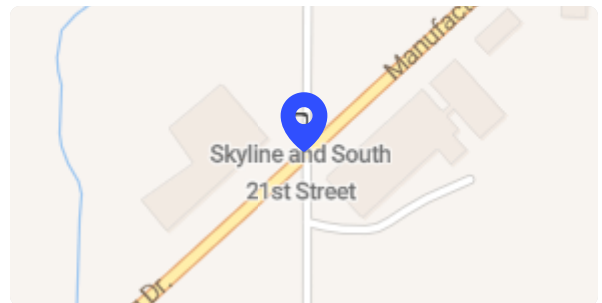
## Service

- Wednesday**, February 5, 2014
- 1:00 PM - 1:45 PM CT
- First United Methodist Church**  
621 South 3rd Street, Clinton IA 52732



## Cemetery Details

- Clinton Lawn Cemetery**  
2100 Manufacturing Drive, Clinton IA 52732





## Tribute Wall

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RS

**Ruzica Djukic Servais** posted:

I was deeply saddened by the news of Elaine Lass passing. I was an AFS student in Clinton in 1975/76 in Zimmerman's family when I met her. She was attentive, friendly, cordial and always ready to help. She would be always in my heart and in my mind. My sincere condolences to Lanie. Ruzica Djukic Servais, France

March 2 at 11:55 PM

KW

**Ken Winter** posted:

I was among the many children entrusted to Mrs Lass' care many years ago and have fond memories of her. Lanie and I attended high school together and so wish to pass onto her my deepest sympathy. Ken Winter

February 12 at 11:28 AM

ML

**Mike Less** posted:

My family lived next door to the Lass's for many years. Elaine would remark that we were the Lass's and the Less's. She always made us feel we were friends with her family. Elaine left a remarkable legacy and touched, in a very positive way, the lives of her family and many others. I'm very thankful to have known her. My sincere condolences to Lanie on the loss of her mom.

February 10 at 3:32 AM

GH

**Gary Herrity** posted:

Elaine Lass was a wonderfully involved leader in our community. My condolences go out to Lanie and the family. Elaine was a tribute to citizenship and helping others. Recently she sent me a fine historical book. She was always thinking of others and how to assist them in some way. We will all miss Elaine and her love for others. Sadly, I will be Iowa City tomorrow, but my mind and prayers will be with Elaine Lass.

February 4 at 1:02 PM

NW

**Nnacy Waite** posted:

We lived next door to Mrs. Lass for a few years. I was able to help her with her children for a short time. She was always so kind. We extend our sympathies to Lannie, Dennis & Nancy Waite

February 3 at 4:44 PM



## Tribute Wall

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**Anonymous** sent a Peaceful White Lilies Basket to the Sites Lass family.



February 3 at 2:44 PM



**Carol Machael** posted:

Lanie, our sincerest condolences on the death of your mother. She certainly engaged in and gave of herself to the community in a big way. She truly made a difference! I got to know her shortly after coming to Clinton in the early 70's...such an energetic person. Clinton wil miss her.

February 3 at 6:44 AM



**Jacqueline, Anchorage, Alaska** posted:

Elaine was a dear Lady and wonderful Friend. Blessings to the family.Jacqueline, Anchorage, Alaska

February 1 at 3:55 PM



**Sharon Lass Field** posted:

Elaine, wife of my father's second cousin was such a kind and loving person when our family visited many years ago. Such a happy time as she took the time to show us around the area, cook for us,-- all to make our stay memorable. For years we have shared our good and bad news, and I always looked forward to cards from her and Lani each holiday. She had a gift for making everyone seem special, and was always interested in what was happening in their lives. She will be missed by so many. I am sending my love and wishes for the peace happy memories bring. Love from Sharon Lass Field.

February 1 at 1:45 PM



**Nancy Anderson Mortensen Trottier** posted:

I remember when I had my first little show at the Clinton Art Association Gallery and Elaine was there to support me. She was always interested in my studio work and had inspirational comments whenever I saw her. Lanie, please know you are in my prayers at this most difficult time.

February 1 at 9:21 AM



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**Anonymous** sent a Beautiful in Blue to the Sites Lass family.



February 1 at 6:03 AM



**Juli Staszewski** posted:

Elaine was always such a giving person. I have many wonderful memories of her. She taught my daughter art lessons when she was a little girl, she always helped in my classroom at Whittier, and always shared her photos of our family get-togethers. Juli Olsen Staszewski

February 1 at 5:23 AM



**Jamie Atchison** lit a candle in honor of Elaine.

Sending prayers to Lanie and all who loved Elaine during this sad time, may God's blessings bring your comfort in the days ah.



February 1 at 3:29 AM



**Jennifer Graf** posted:

What a gracious, giving woman. Our entire community is better by having her as our own. May you rest in His loving arms.

January 31 at 5:08 PM



## **Memories only last if you share them**

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



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