BLOOMINGTON - Margaret Jean Lowther Peterson (Peggy Intons-Peterson) was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota on Oct. 3, 1930 to Wilfred Wesley Lowther and Ruth Margaret Maxwell Lowther. She always considered herself as particularly fortunate because her father, a research engineer, and her mother, an art critic, provided a rich, inquiring and challenging environment. She received a B.A. at the University of Minnesota, an M.A. at the University of Denver and a Ph.D. at the University of Minnesota, where she met her future husband, Lloyd. She and Lloyd were married on December 28, 1953. Shortly thereafter, they moved to Indiana University where Lloyd had been appointed to the faculty.
Peggy joined Lloyd in a substantial research program to try to understand how briefly held information could be transmitted to long-term memory. This approach required developing a technique that permitted assessment of the length of time information could be held in short-term memory. The pursuit yielded an important technique that has been used in numerous applications to study memory, including memory decline with aging and other physiological processes.

Subsequent early research, some collaborative with her husband, and some solo, focused on diverse memorial processes. This work and its related publications were juggled with raising four children and teaching part-time for Indiana University's Department of Psychology. Later, when invited to join another faculty, Indiana University offered her a tenured full professorship - twelve years after receiving her Ph.D. - which she accepted.

In addition to her research on the psychology of memory, she explored other areas, including factors influencing gender-related cross-cultural effects. The latter involved obtaining support from the Swedish government for her work investigating differences among children of both sexes at various ages in Sweden and the United States. During her career, she published numerous research papers and five books, either as sole or collaborating author.


Peggy served as an associate dean in the College of Arts and Science (1972-74), as the interim dean of the faculties (1974-77) and as the chair of the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences (1989-1995), all at Indiana University.

Following retirement, she was active in the docent program at the Indiana University Art Museum and served as a member of the Boards of Directors of the Friends of Art at Indiana University and of WonderLab. She also enjoyed sitting in on courses taught by members of the Indiana University School of Fine Arts.

Peggy often said she had been incredibly fortunate and her life was immeasurably enriched by Lloyd; her four children, Stephen (Eve), Laryn, Bruce, Celia; her two grandchildren, Sara Jean and Seth Vid Peterson; her former daughter-in-law, Eva; close associates of hers and of her children; and her many friends.

Peggy was preceded in death by Celia, Lloyd and Stephen.

In her twilight years, Peggy wanted all to know she had lived a wonderful life. She was a loving, caring and simply amazing wife, mother, grandmother and member of the community. We all miss her dearly and cherish our memories of her.

Peggy requested that her body be donated to science; hence no funeral services will be held. If you wish to join us in celebrating Peggy's life, we will be gathering at the Indiana Memorial Union on Sunday, October 6, 2019, at 1 PM. If memorial gifts are planned, they may be sent to the Indiana University Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences, to WonderLab or to the Friends of Art.