



## Marion Margaret (Fellenz) Jablonski

written by her daughter, Christine.

### Background

Marion was born in West Bend, Wisconsin on April 9th, 1926. Her parents, Rolland and Mildred (Lied) Fellenz owned a dairy farm just a few miles north of Port Washington, Wisconsin. Marion and her three siblings were raised on this farm, "The Valley View". Jerry was her older brother, Shirley and Ron were the two youngest, all deceased now. Many of Marion's Fellenz family nieces and nephews and their families still live in the Ozaukee/Washington Country area.

### Memories

Marion has been a life long author and in her eighties wrote several children's books, about her early life on the farm. One story she told us her children several times was about the time their farmhouse burned down, due to a chimney fire. Her parents ran in and out of the burning house several times, trying to save as much as possible, both thinking that their 2 year old son Ron, had been rescued by the other. But Marion, then 7 years old, had gotten her baby brother Ron out of the house by herself. He had been ill and she had to drag him part of the way, as he was still too weak to walk. Once the house had burned to the ground, the parents realized to their shock that neither one had gotten Ron out. Much to their enormous relief, they found him safe with big sister Marion, at a neighbor's home.



That summer all the neighbors gathered and rebuilt the farmhouse. The family lived in a stone structure, a former horse barn, all summer while the new house was being built. This house, and the stone barn too, are still standing on the original farm homestead in Port Washington.



Marion found time to travel in her retirement years, with Elder Hostel (now Road Scholar Tours). She and dear friend Gail cruised up to Alaska after visiting James and family in Washington and, despite her lack of enthusiasm for water travel, fully enjoyed the trip. Trips to Maine and the Southwest followed later, plus many visits to her dear friends Anna Clair and Howard, in their Oklahoma home. She enjoyed learning about new places, their histories, the people that lived there in the past. When travel agent daughter Monica won a trip to

Hawaii, Marion was delighted to join her in travel to the warm climate. She delighted in the floral scents in the air, the lovely scenery and for months after would review with us the Hawaiian words she had learned.

Marion's early education took place in a one room schoolhouse. She loved those days and after retirement, she and Gail completed a tour of one room schoolhouses in Wisconsin. There were probably a few they didn't get to see, but not many!



### Education/Marriage

Unlike many of her peers in the 1940's farm community in which she was raised, Marion strongly desired to go not just to high school but to college as well. She attended Marquette University and graduated in 3 years with a double major (English and Sociology), having earned all her tuition, room and board on her own. Waitress work at Smith Brothers restaurant in Port was one of her jobs. Later she moved to Milwaukee and worked as a live-in mother's helper for a family (The Youngs). The Jablonski and Young families visited for many years. In her last years at MU, living on campus at Lisette Lodge, she continued to earn her board by being an assistant staffer, at the residence. Her parents did not think she would continue long in "the big city" but she persisted and graduated with honors.



She began her work career at Catholic Charities in Milwaukee. Soon after beginning work, she met Louis S. Jablonski, a young professor at Marquette U, on a double date. They were married within the year, at St. Mary's church in Port Washington, on January 29th, 1948, the coldest day of the year. This lovely church is on a high hill, with many winding steps leading up to it. Although the main entrance to the church is accessed by the parking lot behind, our father would tell us kids, every single time we drove past those steps, "Your mother crawled up those steps on her hands and knees in the snow to marry me." Marion would just smile. They were together until Louis' death in 1984.

### Family History

Their first home was a small one, in Elm Grove, Wisconsin. The family soon outgrew this little two bedroom home and moved into a large old fieldstone brick farmhouse on Lisbon Avenue, in Milwaukee. Built in 1848 by the third cousin of President Pierce, this home is listed as the The George Washington Brown House by the State Historical Society. This home appealed to Louis' historical leanings (he taught history and

economics at Marquette U) and to Marion's love of the beautiful old farm house. Together they raised their 10 children there. The single bathroom had just been installed when they moved in with their 5 oldest children in 1955. The city had closed in around the old house over the years and there was no trace of the farm buildings by then. But the Jablonski cousins living just across the alley would often find horseshoes and old nails when digging in their lawn and garden, remnants of the old farm.





She remained in the old house until age 85, moving to an apartment for a few years. A fall in the apartment brought her to St Anne's for the last 2 years. Although she would have preferred to live independently and find new things to learn and enjoy, she became content at St Anne's.

Marion outlived two of her children (Paul and JanMarie). The remainder, Mary, Christine, Bill (aka Lou), Greg (Beth), Judith (Bob) , David (Alisa), and Monica (Scott) and their children live in the area, with one son James (Zandra) and family residing in Washington State. Marion's oldest children are retiring now and she said more than once over the years it doesn't seem possible that she could have kids that old! She has many Jablonski nieces and nephews all over the country and even 4 great- grand children, Cyrus, Malakhi, Kadon and baby Ilana.

### Work History

Once their youngest child was in school, Marion began to work outside of the home. She was the school secretary at both Christ King and Holy Assumption parishes. After Louis' death, she began full time work as the administrative assistant to the dean, in the Psychology Department at Marquette University. She was involved in the research and purchase of the department's computer system. After retirement, she worked part time in the secretarial pool at Mount Mary (then) College. The friends she made at her work places became lifetime ones and several were in attendance at her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday party in 2016.

