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## Library devotee wrote the book on volunteerism

Equally an advocate for the written word, she was also at home reviewing literary works.

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By TIM STANLEY World Staff Writer | 0 comments

For Jean Risser, the last page of a good book was usually just the beginning.

From there, she had to tell someone about it.

An award-winning Tulsa City-County Library volunteer who devoted her life to literary pursuits, Risser enjoyed talking about books more than anything.

And whether through the public book reviews she was known for or in more private exchanges, she was always looking for the opportunity.

"We recently ran across a bookmark from her much-loved Tuesday Book Club one that she had saved for many years," Risser's son Paul Risser, said.

"It features a quotation from Horace Mann: 'A home without books is like a room without windows.' "

That, more than any statement, summed up



Jean Risser, an award-winning Tulsa library volunteer and longtime figure in the city's literary community, died May 1. She was 101. Courtesy

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his mother's feelings, he added.

Jean McCluskey Risser, a Tulsa Library Hall of Fame member and recipient of the library's Distinguished Service Award, died May 1 in Norman. She was 101.

A private memorial service for family will be held later.

Paul Risser, a former Oklahoma higher education chancellor, said his mother's legacy lives on in her children.

"My brothers and I were fortunate to grow up with parents who valued education, hard work, tolerance and an adventurous

spirit," he said.

"Our mother's passion for books as well as travel resulted in a full and interesting life for all of us."

A longtime board member and volunteer with Tulsa's Friends of the Library and a library docent, Risser felt that no job was too large or too small for her.

She was involved in planning countless library events, as well as helping with publicity and refreshments.

One of her favorite events was the library-sponsored Peggy V. Helmerich Distinguished Author Award presentation.

As a member of the selection committee, she helped choose the annual honoree for many years.

Risser also took a big-picture view of libraries and was a onetime delegate of the Governor's Conference on Libraries and Information Services, as well as a member of several Citizens for Libraries campaign committees.

She was inducted into the Tulsa Library Hall of Fame in 1995 and also was added to the Friends of the Library's Honor Roll.

Her literary interests went beyond the library, though.

A former board member of the Tulsa chapter of the English Speaking Union, Risser previously had overseen the annual union-sponsored Shakespeare Competition for local students.

She also was active with the Tuesday Book Club and other organizations.

Born Jean McCluskey in Billings, Risser moved to California early in her life and attended college at UCLA. Returning to her home state as a young adult, she lived in various places before settling in Tulsa in the 1970s.

Although she moved to Norman a few years ago, family members say her heart always belonged to Tulsa, where she had devoted so much passion and energy.

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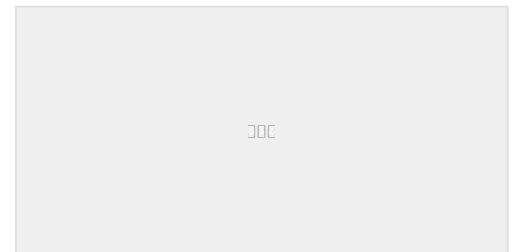


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Risser's survivors include three sons, Paul Risser, James Risser and Ted Risser; 11 grandchildren; and 19 great-grandchildren.

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