



## Suzanne Lake De Vos

June 26, 1929 - June 23, 2025

Suzanne Lake De Vos passed away peacefully on June 23, 2025, under hospice care at Silverado Memory Care Community in Berkeley, California, just three days shy of her 96th birthday.

Suzanne was born in Englewood, New Jersey, to Mayhew Lester and Suzanne Louise (née Robin) Lake, at the hospital nearest their home in The Palisades. Mayhew Lake was a noted composer and arranger of band music. His arrangements, including a popular arrangement of Ravel's Bolero, were used by contemporaries such as John Philip Sousa and Edwin Franko Goldman. As a charter member of the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP), Lake sought to protect the rights of creative musical artists. Suzanne's mother Suzanne Louise emigrated to the U.S. from France, where she had been a successful restaurateur, a career she continued by opening a restaurant in New York City. Suzanne recalled that during the Great Depression her mother always had food available for strangers. Though struggling, her parents protected her from the full hardship of their circumstances. She recalled spending lovely summers in the Poconos and having a very happy childhood overall.

Suzanne's musical talent was recognized at an early age. Her father encouraged her, and taught her harmony and music theory. She studied piano, and at age 14 began vocal training with Queena Mario (Met Opera & Juilliard), then Joseph Florestano. By the age of 18 she had performed in 15 operas with the Juilliard Opera Theater and others. Though she had felt

pressured to excellence as a child, her talents flourished with training, and she was later grateful for her father's guidance and mother's unwavering support. Suzanne was coached in acting by Hollywood great Yul Brynner, Claudia Franck and Larry Blyden. She became a musical performer and actor on Broadway by age 19, first appearing in *The King and I* as Tuptim, and subsequently performed in *Flower Drum Song* as Linda Low and in *No, No, Nanette* (Revival). Suzanne toured as a featured artist for two years with Guy Lombardo, and was a featured artist for the Peter Duchin Orchestra. She also toured for many years as a solo artist backed by various bands in North America, Central America and the Caribbean. Her life as a professional musician was fulfilling, though taxing. A consummate artist, she found great joy in masterfully connecting with audiences. As her performances became less frequent she continued in music, teaching vocal technique privately and master classes on various aspects of auditioning and performing for singers and actors, at UC Davis Extension, San Jose State University, and other colleges in California.

At the age of 45, Suzanne married the love of her life, George A. De Vos, Ph.D., Professor of Anthropology at UC Berkeley. Together they frequently enjoyed hosting family, students, friends, and colleagues who visited from around the world, at their lovely home in the Oakland hills. Suzanne was always elegantly dressed, with unique and tasteful flamboyance. Suzanne and George frequently travelled for Suzanne's performances, and George's conferences and visiting professorships. They made many trips to her mother's beloved France (to visit friends and family, and as tourists), and to further reaches, often off the beaten path. Most memorable of all was a trip into China, shepherding a group of college students along the Silk Road shortly after the communist empire first opened to foreign tourists. Suzanne and George loved their dogs, and always had one or two affectionate Shih Tzus or Lhasa Apsos by their sides. Her final canine bestie, Charlie, predeceased her.

Suzanne is survived by close friends, whose friendships she nourished and

relished. She is also survived by loving stepchildren: Laurie D. Moore (Frederick), Eric De Vos (Lisa), Susan De Vos (Tom McFarland); step-grandchildren, Amber De Vos (whom she helped raise), Antoinette Moore, Brian Moore (Mikkel), Christina De Vos, Diana McFarland (Tyler Robbins), Frederic Moore, Lisa Moore, Patrick Moore (Keillan), Shelby Reed (Kevin); many great-grandchildren; and nephews Greg Lake (Ellen) and Johnathon Lake (Sugar). She is predeceased in death by her husband George (Professor Emeritus), parents Mayhew and Suzanne Louise Lake, brothers Bill Lake (Margaret) and Lester, stepson Michael De Vos, niece Jennifer Haskins, and nephews Jacques (Nancy) and William "Jerry" Lake (Christine). In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in Suzanne's memory to Hopalong Animal Rescue at Marin Humane (<https://marinhumane.org/get-involved/hopalong-foster-program/>), or a charity of your choice.

A memorial gathering will be held at Noon on Saturday, August 23, 2025 at Skyview Memorial Lawn, 200 Rollingwood Drive, Vallejo, CA, (707) 644-7474. The ceremonial event will be livestreamed via Zoom for family and friends unable to travel.

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

AUG **23**. 12:00 PM - 3:00 PM (PT)

Skyview Memorial Lawn

200 Rollingwood Dr.

Vallejo, CA 94591

(707) 644-7474

[info@skyviewmemorial.com](mailto:info@skyviewmemorial.com)

<http://www.skyviewmemorial.com/>

# Tribute Wall

NJ

“ We say goodbye to Suzanne with both sadness and gratitude for the joy she brought into our lives. Suzanne had a wonderful sense of humour, she was quick-witted, full of charm, and always ready with a smile. She started her career in opera at a young age, she also played the role of Tuptim opposite Yul Brynner’s Mongkut in “The King and I”. She played the role for more than two years on Broadway and on the National Tour. Her later career spanned many genres and brought her all over the world. Yet, for all her accomplishments, what we will remember most is the warmth and fun she brought to every gathering.

Together with George, Suzanne created a welcoming home in the Oakland, Hills. Over the years we remember many dinner parties which were always full of warmth, laughter and interesting discussions. We also exchanged New Year’s cards by good old-fashioned mail, a tradition that connected us through the decades. After George’s passing, our lunches at the Lake Chalet and in the last couple of years coffee and cake in our home in Berkeley became treasured rituals. Suzanne’s stories of another world - Broadway lights, television performances, and adventures few could imagine - always left us entertained and inspired. Her unfailing optimism, her laughter, and her words of encouragement lifted us time and again.

The last time we saw Suzanne was at the end of March before we went abroad for several months with a promise to pick her up upon return. Her words of goodbye as usual were “somebody loves you”. That feeling was mutual, and we will always miss you Suzanne.  
Love from Nini, Toby and Charlie

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**Nini Jensen** - September 14, 2025 at 09:21 PM



“ *Suzanne will be greatly missed. She was a dear friend for many years and generously shared her wisdom and experience with all she met. My fondest memories of Suzanne have to be our yearly trips to the San Francisco Ballet. I lived, for twelve years, with Suzanne's other dear friend, Lydia Raymond, just three doors away. For many years we took the BART from Rockridge Station to the Civic Center and walked to the Opera House to enjoy the ballet. We had such fun. I also remember our trips to the house in Ben Lomond exploring the area together enjoying the gardens lovingly tended by Toro. My first memory of Suzanne and George dates back to 2002 when another neighborhood friend, Linda Bochniarz (Lanet) and I joined them on a Grand Circle cruise down the Danube. I had just moved to CA and was delighted to be included in their adventure. Over the years we shared many meals, culture, joys and sorrows and I am blessed to have called her friend. Rest In Peace dear Suzanne.*

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**Irene Holowchak** - July 31, 2025 at 05:43 PM



“ *1 file added to the album Suzanne*



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**Eric De Vos** - July 28, 2025 at 01:08 PM