



## Maxine Joyce Ohlmann Groen

November 10, 1928 - May 14, 2025

Maxine Joyce Ohlmann Groen—“Macky”—was born in Hudsonville, Michigan, to Carl and Elizabeth (Spoelman) Ohlmann. She was the third of five daughters. As a girl, she worked on the family “truck farm” growing vegetables for local sellers.

At the age of 16, she went to Calvin College to study nursing, working as a nanny to pay for room and board. After graduating, she worked as a nurse at Blodgett Hospital in Grand Rapids MI; as the official nurse for one of Henry Ford’s factories; and for private families. Later, she received a scholarship to do a master’s degree in nursing at Columbia University in Manhattan. She loved her time in New York City.

Raised in the Dutch Reformed Church and community, Maxine had a spiritual awakening in her 30’s and in her words “gave my life over to God for him to use.” She accepted a call from the church mission society and set out as a single woman to work as Matron (head nurse) for MKAR Christian Hospital in Nigeria. She often told the story of hearing angels’ wings clapping when she gave her life to this service. Three years later, she met and married her husband, Dr. Gerrit Paul Groen II. They worked together at the hospital for 10 years. They had two sons: Gerrit Paul Groen III and Joel Terna Groen. Macky and her family eventually settled in Wheaton, Illinois.

Some years later, Macky was recruited to develop a Nursing Degree Program for Trinity Christian College just outside Chicago. While simultaneously pursuing a PhD in Education, she developed the curriculum, recruited the faculty as well as the students, and launched the program. It was her crowning professional achievement.

After 20 years in Wheaton and with their sons through college, Macky and Paul turned their focus once again to mission. They saw a major need for further medical education for African doctors in their own countries. With local Congolese partners, they set to work to create a Residency Program in Goma, Eastern Congo. It began as Doctors On Call for Service (DOCS), with training provided by visiting doctors from the US. It is now a fully accredited program and an independent hospital called HEAL Africa, run entirely by local doctors, whose graduates serve all over Congo.

During this time, Macky and Paul moved to Longboat Key, Florida, where they were active members of Christ Church of Longboat Key, especially devoted to singing in the choir. Their final residence was Plymouth Harbor retirement community. At the time of Paul's death in October 2024, Paul and Macky had been married for almost 59 years.

Maxine is survived by her two sons, five grandsons (Gunnar, Boden, Torsten, Schuyler and Sebastian) and one sister (Carol Kanode).

A Celebration of Life was held at Plymouth Harbor on June 12, 2025. A Memorial Service of Witness to the Resurrection will be held at Christ Church of Longboat Key on November 15, 2025 at 2:30 p.m. In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to HEAL AFRICA: <https://healafrika.org/donate/> —OR— Christ Church of Longboat Key <http://www.christchurchoflbk.org/>

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

NOV 15. 2:30 PM (ET)

Christ Church of Longboat Key  
6400 Gulf of Mexico Drive  
Longboat Key, FL 34228