

6H-R
6-27-2024 **Suzanne 'Sue' Ahrens**



Suzanne "Sue" Ahrens, 83, of Grinnell, Iowa, passed peacefully on Tuesday, June 11, 2024, at Everystep Kavanaugh House in Des Moines, Iowa, after a series of cardiovascular-related issues.

A Celebration of Life service is scheduled for 10 am, Saturday, July 20, at First Presbyterian Church of Grinnell, with the Rev. Kirsten Klepfer officiating. A luncheon will be hosted at Buckley Dining Hall

(Mayflower Community) immediately following the service. Burial will be held at Chester Cemetery, north of Grinnell, after the luncheon. Attendees are welcomed to wear bright colors in celebration of Sue's life.

Sue Ahrens' family also welcomes friends to join a "Midwest Goodbye" gathering to share stories and remembrances to be held at Buckley Dining Hall from 5 to 7 p.m., Friday, July 19, with light refreshments.

Sue was born August 9, 1940, in Omaha, Neb., the daughter of Willard and Marjorie (Pratt) Verba. After a short time in Omaha, the family moved to Cedar Rapids, Iowa, where she graduated from Washington High School.

Sue continued her education at Iowa State University where she met and married her first husband Richard "Dick" McDougal. Dick, an Air Force pilot, and Sue were stationed at several posts and were blessed with their daughters Dawn and Wendy. Dick tragically died in a training flight on August 28, 1964, while the family was stationed in Okinawa.

Sue moved back to the Cedar Rapids area, finished her degree at Coe College and began her teaching career in the Cedar Rapids School District. Sue reconnected with an old friend, Jim Ahrens and the two married in 1982. Their new blended family included Sue's daughters Dawn and Wendy, and Jim's daughters Amé and Abi. That year Sue and Jim moved to Lexington, Mo., where Sue taught kindergarten in the Lexington School District for 32 years.

In retirement, Sue devoted her time to community service, embodying a lifelong commitment to learning and teaching. Always willing to lend a hand, she volunteered for many organizations. In 2008, Sue and Jim moved to Grinnell and joined the Mayflower Community where she was active in many groups, as well as being a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Grinnell, the Grinnell UCC Congregational Church, and PEO.

Sue's life was devoted to family and nature. She loved camping, botany, birdwatching and was a dog lover with a long line of furry "children" over the years. Sue also loved music and could often be heard singing along to her favorite folk music and Broadway showtunes. She was a devoted member in her church choirs for many years, and instilled her love for music in her daughters.

But her greatest joy in life was her family, and she cherished her title of "Grandma Sue" above all else. She spent countless hours with the grandchildren, taking them camping and on Elder Hostel adventures, attending soccer games, concerts and recitals. And her grandchildren inherited her love of music. All four would serenade the Mayflower community in annual recitals at the Carman Center.

Sue was preceded in death by her parents, first husband Dick and second husband Jim. She is survived by her daughters: Dawn (Mike) Miller, Wendy McDougal, Amé (Brian) Krippner, and Abi Ahrens (Eric Rathburn); her grandchildren: Aaron Miller, McKenna Miller, Lauren (Sean) McNamara and Megan Krippner; and her brother Jim Verba.

Memorial contributions may be designated to the PEO Educational Loan Fund, First Presbyterian Church of Grinnell, Sugar Creek Audubon Nature Sanctuary or the Mayflower Community Human Needs Endowment Fund. All can be mailed in care of Smith Funeral Home, PO Box 368, Grinnell, IA 50112.