



Diane Thompson

October 9, 1934 - January 10, 2015

Diane Sargent Thompson died of cancer on January 10. She was born in 1934 in Forest City, Iowa, the daughter of Lynn Sargent and Ruth Clark Sargent.

Diane is survived by her husband of 58 years, Thomas Thompson; her children Brenda Thompson, Alicia Kamm and husband Tom Kamm, Mark Thompson, and Rosemary Thompson; and her grandchildren, Evan, Brian, and Lydia Kamm.

She is also survived by her closest friends Walt Alliss, Mary Fain, and Steve Schoon from her days working at KUNI FM radio and beyond; and lifelong friends Sally Breckenridge, Janice Crowe, Vonnie Prager, Colleen Hadley, and Beverly Rosenthal.

Diane graduated from East High School in Waterloo in 1952, received her English degree from the University of Northern Iowa in 1956, and earned her master's degree in English from UNI several years later while raising her first three children.

Diane had many passions and occupations throughout her life. She was a stay-at-home mom while her children were young, but always had a variety of community and personal projects going on simultaneously.

First and foremost she was an inventive and generous mother, supporting all of her children in any directions they wanted to go, with love and understanding. She instilled a love of books, reading, animals, and nature that shaped their lives, and created unique family traditions that will be carried on for generations.

She co-founded a Montessori nursery school, the first in Cedar Falls, so her kids could attend. She participated in anti-war organizations and protests, was a volunteer for Head Start, and with a friend started an informal knitting school for women in Waterloo that lasted for many years. She volunteered at the Cedar Falls Public Library and helped start the Book Nook, which sells used books for the library's benefit. She protested the greyhound track in Waterloo, just one of many animal welfare causes that she supported. She was involved in Democratic party politics for much of her life, and enthusiastically championed Barack Obama's presidential campaign in Iowa.

In 1975, Diane earned her real estate license and in her brief career as a realtor sold a commercial building on the Cedar Falls Parkade. In 1980 she became the record librarian at KUNI, the public radio station at the University of Northern Iowa. She spent nearly three decades at KUNI and was in her element there in many ways. The job combined things that Diane loved: making lots of lists, organizing things exactly the way she thought that they should be, and being with smart and interesting people. She had free rein to use her library science training to create an organizational system, she set her own hours, and no one made her use a computer. When Diane went on vacation, the records stacked up untouched until she returned, and she wouldn't have had it any other way. Most importantly, she adored the people she worked with at KUNI and enjoyed every day she was there.

Diane had many great joys in her life, including her deep love of books

(reading and collecting), nature, her cats, and corresponding with beloved friends through actual handwritten letters (“Who keeps a pile of emails tied in blue ribbon in the attic?”). She had a gift for friendships; she was sincerely interested in and curious about people and they gravitated to her. Some of her closest lasting friendships began in elementary school. She loved traveling with her daughters and friends, and especially enjoyed many trips to the Texas coast with her grandchildren.

A memorial service will be held in early June, details to be announced at a later date.

Diane’s family is deeply grateful to Cedar Valley Hospice for making it possible for her to spend her last months at home with family and friends, as well as her beloved cat.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Iowa Humane Alliance, the Animal Legal Defense Fund, or the animal welfare organization of your choice.

Tribute Wall

MT

“ i lived with mom (who i called "medallion") for a long time--for one reason because that meant i didnt have to live in a group home or ward (even worse)--mom literally saved me and i loved her dearly--it may be a long time beofre i get over it

mark thompsonm - November 05, 2019 at 12:27 PM

DW

“ it was with deep sorrow that i recently found out about mrs. thompson's passing. i had no idea.
i was a chess friend of mark's, and would visit their house periodically and she would always enjoy seeing me.
i wish the rest of the family well.



dave wolz - July 27, 2015 at 09:06 PM