



Susan M. Runkle

October 29, 1931 - November 26, 2020

Susan Mack Runkle, 89, Cedar Falls

Susan was born on October 29, 1931, to Edward Mack, Jr. and Louise Matson Mack in Columbus, OH. She spent her childhood in Columbus and Chapel Hill, NC, as her father was appointed to various university chemistry professorships. She graduated from the University School in Columbus and was a scholarship student at Flora Stone Mather College at Western Reserve University, where she graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and Secondary Education, with high honors. She was a member of Phi Beta Kappa and Mortar Board.

In August 1953, she married Robert L. Runkle, Jr. She taught Social Studies and English at Memorial Junior High School while Bob earned his Master of Social Work degree and began work at the Goodrich Settlement House in Cleveland. Their first child, David, was born in 1956, and they soon moved to Cedar Falls, Iowa, where their other two children, Laura and Paul, were born. Bob worked at the Black Hawk-Grundy Mental Health Center as a social worker and then as Executive Director until his retirement.

Susan actively volunteered in the Cedar Valley community until her youngest child was in preschool, then earned her Master's degree in Library Science at The University of Northern Iowa. Susan worked for the Waterloo Community

Schools for over 20 years, starting as a librarian and talented and gifted teacher at Cresthaven Elementary School, and finishing at Hoover Middle School. She was a member of Kappa Delta Pi, the international honor society for educators; the philanthropic education association PEO; and Nineteenth Century Club.

Susan was a tireless volunteer. She served on the committee for one of the first affordable housing projects in the Cedar Valley; as a deacon and elder at First Presbyterian Church, Cedar Falls; and on the community concerts board at UNI. She was a strategist for the winning campaigns of Peg Anderson for Cedar Falls school board and for Jon Crews' first mayoral campaign. She served on the Cedar Falls Public Library Board of Trustees for over 14 years. She participated in weeks-long missions to the Theological College of the West Indies in Kingston, Jamaica with Bob. After she retired, she volunteered as a reading mentor at North Cedar Elementary School.

She was a loving and supportive wife, mother, and grandmother, always encouraging experimentation, learning experiences, and fun. She was happy to try cooking a new dish or visiting a new restaurant, and she excelled at the game of hearts. Her garden was a quiet joy. Her home was always full of music, and she attended a great many concerts. Susan and Bob enjoyed traveling and camping with their young children and traveling more widely once they both retired.

Susan is survived by her three children: David (Patricia) of Mendham, NJ; Laura (Michael Miller) of Cedar Rapids, IA; and Paul (Jenn Collins) of Chapel Hill, NC; and her nine grandchildren: Anne, Sam, Sarah, Jeffrey, Libby, Julia, James, Sydney, and Kevin. She is also survived by her sister Mary Ashley Gustafson of Willoughby, OH; her sister-in-law Dottie Newick of San Jose, CA; her sister-in-law Anne Mack of Sequim, WA; and numerous nieces and nephews, friends and former colleagues. Susan was preceded in death by her

husband, Robert Runkle, her parents and parents-in-law, her brothers-in-law, and her brother, George Mack.

Per her wishes, Susan's body has been donated to the deeded body program of the University of Iowa Medical College Department of Anatomy for study and research. A celebration of life will be 10:30 a.m. Saturday, June 18, 2022, at First Presbyterian Church in Cedar Falls. Visitation will be an hour and a half before the service at church. Masks are requested. Memorial donations may be directed to First Presbyterian Church, Cedar Falls, or to the Robert and Susan Runkle Scholarship in Social Work through the University of Northern Iowa Foundation.

Susan will be fondly remembered for her keen mind, generosity, welcoming spirit, kindness, gentle sense of humor, and devotion to family and community.

The Runkle family extends grateful thanks to the staff at Nation Memory Cottage of the Western Home Communities for their loving care of Susan during her last months and final days.

Previous Events

Visitation

JUN 18. 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM (CT)

First Presbyterian Church
902 Main Street
Cedar Falls, IA 50613
(319) 277-3930
<http://www.firstprescf.org/>

Celebration of Life

JUN 18. 10:30 AM (CT)

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902 Main Street
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Tribute Wall

AK

“ I have just read of Susan's passing and I am so sorry. She made such a difference in the lives of my special needs students at North Cedar. For several years, she would come once a week. Our Pals benefitted greatly by the example of her gentle, caring ways. She was such a blessing and we all looked forward to the times we could be together. For me, she was a very wonderful friend, as well. I loved visiting with her and hearing about her life and adventures traveling with Bob, her parents and how very proud she was of all of you. She loved you so very much. I am soooo glad to have known her. I will be keeping all of you in prayer.

adel kessler - December 02, 2020 at 05:48 PM

AA

“ I first met Susan in August 1974 when she and I both started working at Cresthaven Elementary. Susan was a wonderful educator but more than that, she was such a kind, loving person. I have many fond memories of time spent with her at school, but also social events outside of the classroom. Please know, you are im my thoughts and prayers during this difficult time. Anne Myers Ahlschwede

Anne Ahkschwede - December 02, 2020 at 01:08 PM

KR

“ To the Runkle family our deepest condolences. Many fond memories of Susan. Our thoughts and prayers are with you. Kathy and Kurt Rickard

KATHRYN RICKARD - November 30, 2020 at 09:50 PM

SH

“ Dave and family, I was sorry to hear of the passing of your mother. I always felt that she was warm and welcoming to me. I don't recall ever seeing her without a smile. I pray for strength and healing for your family.

Cordially, Sherilyn Unruh Hines

Sherilyn Hines - November 29, 2020 at 10:33 PM

JM

“ For Dave and all of the family- I'm so sorry to hear of your mom passing. She sounds like an amazing woman, as I'm sure you know. Please know that I am remembering you all in prayers for strength.

Julie Smith Michalicek - November 29, 2020 at 08:39 PM

JH

“ Susan was a great advocate for gifted children and a mentor for GT teachers. She inspired me with her “Images of Greatness” project. She taught young people and her peers. Rest In Peace!

Jewell Hays - November 29, 2020 at 07:08 PM

TE

“ Susan Runkle Family - I was sorry to read about Susan's passing. She and Bob were two of the most caring people I have ever met. They were both so supportive of my professional career and the Mental Health Center. I last received a nice note from her when she was unable to attend our first MH Awareness Breakfast last year, an event she hoped to attend and was so supportive of. She will be missed.

Tom Eachus

Tom Eachus - November 29, 2020 at 03:03 PM

AT

“ Susan Runkle Family, You have my deepest sympathy with the loss of Susan. Susan was the librarian at Cresthaven when I was principal of Cresthaven from 1982-87. Susan was a very professional and warm person. Great personality. God be with you at this time of sadness. With sympathy, Art Trebon, Beverly Hills, Florida



Arthur David Trebon - November 29, 2020 at 02:11 PM

JH

“ To Sue's family, I have such fond memories of Sue and Bob. Their home was charming, they were such gracious hosts, and indeed, always music in the background! I met Sue many decades ago volunteering for one project or another. Meanwhile, professionally I had come to know Bob. My last memory of Sue was about 2 years ago, seeing her at the supermarket. She apologized for not having contacted me about something or other--totally unnecessary for her to worry about. I simply enjoyed seeing her beautiful smile and having a warm chat. In deep sympathy, Judith Harrington

Judith Harrington - November 29, 2020 at 10:38 AM