



Jane S. Smith

August 9, 1928 - June 11, 2017

Jane Schneberger Smith, aged 88, of Traverse City, Michigan, passed away on June 11, 2017, with her family by her side. Jane was born in Chicago on August 9, 1928 to Frank R. and Marion (Durante) Schneberger. A strong, outspoken, loving woman, she lived a life of service making the world a better place.

A graduate of Chicago's South Shore High School (1946) and the University of Colorado (BA, cum laude, Chemistry, 1950, where she was an active Tri Delta), Jane worked as a chemist for Griffiths Spices and Kellogg Switchboard. In 1950, she married Z. Erol Smith Jr.; together, they had six children: Suzan Mackenzie Smith, Tracy Smith Cawley, Cameron (Dan) Farley, Z Erol (Caz Taylor) Smith III, Kimberly (Cliff) Van Den Elzen, and Scott (Kris) Smith. They built a home in Palos Heights, Illinois, where Jane was heavily involved with civic organizations including the Girl Scouts. From 1969-74 she worked for Girl Scout Councils in Chicago and Lansing developing programs that helped girls become leaders.

In 1974, Jane became director of the Michigan State University Service Learning Center, an organization that allowed students to learn from real-world experience while giving back to the community. In selecting her for this position over 100 applicants who all held advanced degrees, her new employer encouraged her to obtain further education. While raising her children, now as a single mother, she obtained a Masters degree in Communication and then a Ph.D. in Educational Administration. She found time to serve on the board of directors of the Michigan Capitol Girl Scout Council, the Lansing Retired & Senior Volunteers Program, and served as president of the East Lansing chapter of Zonta International, an organization seeking to empower women.

In 1981, with her youngest child off to college, Jane relocated to Ashland, Wisconsin, where she served as City Clerk from 1981-1989, and then Interim City Administrator 1989-90, when she first tried to retire. The City, however, called her back into service as acting City Clerk in both 2003 and 2006. While in Ashland, she served on the Boards of Directors of Ashland Museum, Partners in Recovery, Friends of the Library, New Horizons, Ashland

& Bayfield Counties League of Women Voters, New Day Shelter, Big Top Chautauqua, and the Ashland County Human Services Board. When not serving on boards, she helped with the day-to-day work of numerous organizations including the Ashland Water and Wastewater Utility, Ashland Beautification Committee, the Alliance for Sustainability, Restore the Depot, and the Tree Board. She served on the City of Ashland Planning Commission, co-chaired the Ashland Comprehensive Plan Committee and its Plan Implementation Committee. She served as co-editor of a book on the history of the city, titled "Looking Backward, Moving Forward." At her eightieth birthday celebration, a former mayor, noting that many residents thought you had to be born in Ashland to be considered a true local, read a proclamation declaring her to be a 'born-again Ashlander'.

She had a lifelong interest in history and in the stories behind family trees, publishing her own family's history ("Roots and Wings" in 2002). She shared these stories with her children and grandchildren Joel, Meghan, Danny, Zach, Christian, Josh, Brianne, Kristin, and Hazel, and five great-grandchildren. In 2010, she moved to Traverse City, Michigan into the Glen Eagle Retirement Community, where she provided ancestry research for over 100 residents.

Throughout her life, she loved nothing better than to have her hands in the soil, planting her garden. She was known for her tirelessness, her tenacity, and her sense of humor. She was proud of what she was able to accomplish while working in her community, and prouder still of her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, and will be remembered for the love she gave us all.

A celebration of her life will be held in Ashland, Wisconsin the weekend of August 12-13, with details to follow in the Ashland Daily Press. Contributions in her memory may be made to Downtown Flower Project, City of Ashland, 601 West Main Street, Ashland WI 54806, or the New Day Shelter (<http://www.ndshelter.org/>).

Comments



“ I was sorry to hear of the passing of Jane. Jane always had a smile and a hello when I visited my father, Carl Schlueter. Jane provided my dad with family history that has helped me to learn more about our family since his passing.

She was a friend to many and helped to make my dad's stay at GE better.

I hope the beautiful memories you have help to ease your pain.

Brenda (Schlueter) Harrelson

Brenda Harrelson - July 12, 2017 at 06:21 AM



“ During my two terms as Mayor of Ashland I had the opportunity to get to know Jane and appreciate what a wonderful, intelligent and dedicated human being she was. It was always a delight coming to work at City Hall and being greeted by Jane. Working together, we accomplished some great things for the city but they would not have happened without the steady, patient and able guidance of Jane.

After I left office and moved away for other career opportunities, Jane and I kept in touch by letters, phone calls, emails and of course, Christmas newsletters. I always knew I could count on Jane to tell me something about each son or daughter and all the wonderful grandkids. At the ends of the newsletter she would leave just a little space to tell the readers about her. That was Jane...Always putting others first and always serving others.

Every once in a while a person comes along that is so extraordinary that you are humbled by the blessing you received in knowing that person. That's how I feel about Jane.

To her children and grandchildren, I extend my sincere sympathy. Be cheerful, dedicated to service and helpful to others. Then, at the end of your days people will say "there passes a truly wonderful person." And you too will be missed.

Dan Theno,
Former Ashland Mayor

Dan Theno - June 16, 2017 at 12:08 PM



“ My condolences to the Smith family. Jane became Ashland City Clerk during my time with the City Engineering Department. I will always remember Jane as an extremely intelligent, competent, effective leader who always knew how to be compassionate and/or tough, depending on what the situation needed. Jane just had a gift for leadership and a fearless way of addressing problems that made her successful and respected. Those tough times of being a single mother with a large family equipped her with a set of skills that made her the professional she was. It may sound bad, but motherhood helped her develop the skills to work in the political realm and manage the city household. I always thought that after raising her brood, managing a City wasn't all that tough. During my tenure at City Hall my grandfather passed. At the time I didn't have a decent vehicle to make the long drive to his funeral. Jane loaned me her own car so I could go. Jane was such a special dear friend to me. I will always think of her and her many kindnesses she showed me. The world has lost a truly great Lady.
Emmer Shields

Emmer Shields - June 15, 2017 at 10:48 AM



“ Such a lovely, strong, intelligent lady. Ashland is a much better city because of Jane. God bless, my deepest condolences to the family.

Lyn - June 15, 2017 at 09:36 AM



“ The world lost a really special woman on Sunday. My grandma was a fiery, strong lady who told the most amazing stories, loved her family fiercely, and had the best sense of humor right till the very end. She was hard-headed and sometimes difficult, but also had this incredible soft side... she taught my mom her love of flowers and gardening, was always looking forward to the birds visiting her bird feeder, and loved my little girls so much. She wasn't a very "fluffy" person, so when she told me last week, "you are so special to me," I knew she really meant it, and that is something I will keep with me always. We love you Grandma Jane and miss you already.

Kristin Hussey - June 15, 2017 at 07:49 AM



“ Yesterday, Heaven got another angel.

My Mom, Jane Smith, has passed away. She was 88 years old. A single mother of six (i am the youngest). A women who not only was strong to raise six children on her own, but also also strong in her opinions and convictions. (Just ask her). She taught us how to be strong, self sufficient, and how being willing to do hard work will get you to your goals. She always gave lots of her time to many of her volunteer originations. As a single mom, she went back to work and was the Program and Trainer Director for the Girls Scouts Council for the state of Michigan. She was also the Director of the Student Learning Center at Michigan State University. She also managed to somehow go back to school and got her Masters of Arts in Communication, and a PhD., Doctoring of Philosophy in Educational Administration. Later, she was the City Clerk of Ashland, WI, where she later retired. She loved gardening, traveling, and family. She also had an Awesome sense of humor and is the original author of many of my bad "dad jokes". She will be greatly missed. We will be honoring her passing on August 12th, in Ashland, WI.
We Love You Tons Mom!
Scott Smith

Scott Smith - June 14, 2017 at 09:01 PM



“ Grandma Jane,

You raised an entire family on your own and watched as your family tree took root. You were brilliant, witty, compassionate, but most of all you were loving. I know that I will find myself repeating the many "Janeisms" to my family, just like my dad did to me. I hope there are plenty of tomatoes and yellow finches in heaven.
Rest In Peace Grandma Jane
Love,
Joshua Smith

Josh Smith - June 14, 2017 at 08:59 PM



“ Grandma

This is something that i should have finished writing yesterday, but those who know me will tell you that i can look at a blank page for an hour and not have a single word written down. To make matters worse this is not something that is easy to write about.

Humans are a strange group of beings. We have it in our minds that when a loved one is about to pass that Time will just stop. That it will give us just enough to be with them, to see them once more, to say our goodbyes and tell them how much they mean to us. We know that this is impossible yet we demand that a concept created by humans should bend to our will just this once... and when it doesn't we feel cheated... This is how i felt yesterday and the day before when my Grandmother, Jane Smith, passed away. Even as a man of science, with all my understanding and rational (as we like to believe), knowing this truth didn't make me feel any less cheated, any less angry, or any less sad. I needed time to think about what to say here, and I'll probably need more time to fully heal from this loss. I spent yesterday trying to make myself smile as much as I could, laughter is the best medicine and I really needed a good laugh or 12. But I know that if Grandma Jane could talk to me now she'd be giving me her perfected, patent pending, "Grandma Guilt Trip" if i kept putting things off. Time and Life waits for no one, and I am no exception.

Grandma Jane, was one of the smartest, sharpest, wittiest people i have come to known. She had sage like advice and somehow always knew what to say and when to say it. Even when the topic was something she didn't fully understand, she would listen to you. Her mind was as keen as anyone in their prime and far wiser than many i have met. She could enter a room and make it feel brighter and warmer, but if you upset her you could feel the stern look she gave from miles away. When I was little I convinced myself that she could do these things with magical powers. As an adult, I have yet to disprove that possibility. She cared for her children and grandchildren, and could make the impossible a reality. I will always cherish my memories of her and the lessons she taught me.

If by some miracle you can hear me while I'm typing this, I want you to know I love you. I will miss the time i got to spend with you. While my emotions may be running on high right now, know that I'm okay. These wounds will close and heal, and if they leave a scar it will just be another way to remind myself of the amazing person you are.

Love You
Zack Smith