



Ann Marie Smith

January 30, 1952 - February 14, 2020

On Valentine's Day, February 14, 2020 God welcomed home a new Angel. Ann Marie Smith, 68, passed calmly and quietly with her family in the privacy of her new apartment in the Faith Hospice at Trillium Woods in Grand Rapids, MI. A proud Michigander and Upper Peninsula resident, Ann lived her entire life in Michigan.

Born in Mt. Pleasant, MI on January 30th, 1952 (a birthday she was proud to share with Franklin D. Roosevelt), Ann was an exceptional spirit and exceptional person from the start. Her extraordinary intellect was always evident and when tested for the first time in the second grade, her intellectual development qualified her to skip four grades.

Recognizing that being surrounded by classes full of early teens might not be the easiest environment for a second grader, Ann was skipped a grade and her academic career was off to the races.

The Smith family moved to Midland, MI when Ann was ten and Ann's broad range of interests took flight. In the Midland Public Schools, she began a lifelong love of music as an accomplished clarinetist, a passion for writing and poetry, learned her first foreign language (French), played in the marching band and was a National Merit Scholar. Her strong character shone through; above all else she loved her family, cared about the welfare of others above her own self-interest, had an extraordinary and exceptional love for learning, always strove for excellence, and, of course, she loved to read.

Ann entered the University of Michigan in the late nineteen sixties and took full advantage of the freedom and flexibility of the day. She learned her second foreign language (Russian) and built her own degree in French literature and Russian language. After graduation Ann entered the workforce and developed a new passion - leadership.

Ann crafted a corporate quilt of uniquely distinct jobs. Given her capacity to learn and grow, Ann was employed, among other pursuits, as a caregiver at a pre-school, a technical writer for a Fortune 50 company, a technical writer for a testing lab, a lab supervisor at the same testing lab, and ultimately found her perfect place, the Pickford Community Library. Wherever Ann went, she self-trained to become a true subject matter expert. Her deep caring and passion to help others made her a natural leader. Coupled with her indomitable spirit, her relentless energy and an unfailingly positive attitude, Ann was a force for the betterment of everyone that she touched.

Born in a small town, Ann was happiest in her life journey in the Upper Peninsula. She loved being close to her family's seasonal home on Sugar Island and spending summer vacations and holidays with them. Her last years were filled with great joy because she found her true calling in Pickford, Michigan. Ann was born to be a Librarian. As the Librarian for the Pickford Community Library, Ann finally had the perfect vehicle to fulfill her heart's fondest desire; to leave the world a better place.

As the Librarian of the Pickford Community Library, she expanded the library and supported the PAL Center, and most importantly shared her love of books, reading and learning with others.

Following in her Mother's footsteps, she brought joy to the lives of hundreds of children. Whether reading to small groups at Story Time, taking a special interest in someone's else's special interest, setting up Movie Night or simply sharing her smile with everyone that she met, Ann Marie Smith cared and loved without measure.

Ann was never prouder than when the Library was #1 in the nation in the 2018 Scholastic Reading Challenge. And she was relentless in her pursuit of opportunities and activities to enhance the lives of others. She brought the Smithsonian exhibit, Hometown Teams, and an upcoming exhibit "Crossroads: Change in Rural America", through her work with the Michigan Humanities council. She filled the library with activity, hosting speakers, The Young Writers Group and many other classes. Ann was also a fixture in the community, supporting the Farmers Market and Pickford Hay Days. She was recently appointed to the Board of the Alcona Health Center.

Her end of life journey was one that she embraced with the same enthusiasm with which she lived her life. Despite the cancer that took her life so quickly, her relentlessly positive attitude, her endearing love for others and her life gift of giving to and taking care of others was an example that inspired many and is worthy of imitation. Her chaplain at Trillium Woods perhaps summed it up the best - after his first meeting with her he went back to his office and wondered if he had actually met an angel living on earth.

Ann's parents, Layle V. and Imogene Rawson Smith, predeceased her. She is survived by two brothers, Kip and Kris Smith, and her beloved niece, Susan Jensena (Jenni) Smith. Ann will be buried next to her mother and maternal grandmother, who she loved dearly, in Gilmore Township, MI. Her interment will be held in a private family ceremony.

(March 12, 2020 Celebration of Life has been postponed at this time) Although Ann was a gifted gardener, we would ask that in lieu of flowers a donation to the Pickford Community Library or alternatively, to your local library would be appreciated. To honor Ann's memory we will have a short ceremony followed by the sharing of remembrances and a pot luck luncheon. Light refreshments will be provided. Dishes to share will be well appreciated. The Pickford Community Library and the PAL are located at 230 East Main Street, P.O. Box 277, Pickford, MI 49774. Arrangements were handled by the Stephenson-Wyman Funeral Home. On-line guestbook at <http://www.stephenson-wyman.com>

Events

MAR **Celebration of Life** **11:00AM**

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Pickford Arts and Learning Center

P.O. Box 277 230 East Main Street, Pickford, MI, US, 49774

Comments



“ I've just now read that my dear friend, Ann Marie, is gone.

I'm very saddened, but I wish to extend my condolences to her family, and her niece especially, who she talked about constantly, and cared for very deeply.

I met Ann Marie at the Pickford Community Library in the spring of 2013, and felt like I'd met a kindred spirit. She invited me to share my experience of living in the Middle East to the "Let's Talk About It: Muslim Journeys" book series, and I was delighted to do so--and amazed! At a community library in the Upper Peninsula, there was a reading series from Muslim authors? How wild was that? Ann Marie Smith wild and ambitious, that's how.

It is an understatement to say that the library flourished with her attention. She always greeted everyone with enthusiasm, and then pulled them in for a little volunteer work based on their skills. I was happy to edit her writing; she had a tendency to include too many adjectives, because just one adjective in a clause couldn't begin to contain her joy.

After I'd known Ann Marie one week, I had the unheard of experience of having her, a new acquaintance, appear in my dream. I was eating a bagel outside a rustic cabin, and it was a bad bagel. So I threw it up in the air like a clay target, and shot it with an antique shot gun (I've never shot a gun in my life). Ann Marie came out to investigate the noise, and decided to give the bagel a shot too, but she missed. "No I didn't," she insisted in my dream, giggling the whole time, "I got a bullseye. I shot it through the hole." The next day, I went into the library and told her the story of my dream.

"That's right!" she laughed, "That's exactly what I would say!" She was a natural partner in crime, as long as the crime was causing mischief to awaken everyone to the richness of the universe.

Ann Marie knew the fissure between life and death well. She promoted suicide prevention programs at the library, and support groups for young people. We will all think of her every time we pick up a new book or an old favorite. She lives beyond history, non-fiction and fiction now. Save a bagel for me, my sister at heart. I'm sure they are good there.

Anne Catherine Stander