



Mary Graves

December 15, 1933 - April 29, 2020

Mary Lucille Graves, formerly of Des Moines, died April 29, 2020, at Halcyon House in Washington, Iowa after a three-year battle with dementia.

A memorial service will be held at a later date. Memorials may be directed to Central Methodist Music Department in Fayette, Missouri, First Baptist Church in Des Moines, or the Mennonite Church in Des Moines. The Jones & Eden Funeral Home is assisting the family with arrangements. Condolences may be sent for Mary Lu's family through the web at www.jonesfh.com or to John or Margery Graves, 619 Park St., Apt. B315, Grinnell, IA 50112.

She was born December 15, 1933, to John C. and Lena (Watson) Graves in Gower, Missouri. She attended school at Gower, graduating from Gower High School in 1951. In the fall of that year, she entered Central College at Fayette, Missouri, majoring in music education and graduating with honors in 1955. She taught briefly in Canton, Missouri and Walnut, Iowa before entering Drake University, where she graduated in 1959 with a Master's Degree in music education. She was proficient in piano as well as trombone. Mary Lu taught both vocal music and band in the Saydel elementary schools for many years, retiring in 1994.

Mary Lu took an uncommon interest in all her nieces and nephews. She introduced music and musical instruments to many of them, and took some on long or short trips. She became famous for her applesauce, which she would share at Christmas, and her "train cakes." In addition, she sometimes would take a struggling child under her wing with some kind of special attention.

Mary Lu was a member of First Baptist Church of Des Moines, and a good friend of the Mennonite Church. She was also a member for several years of the Des Moines Women's Club. She enjoyed traveling with friends and family members, visiting various countries in Europe and South America, Russia, and many parts of the United States. Music was an extremely important part of her life; she enjoyed teaching folk dancing and played in

several ensembles in Des Moines after her retirement. For several years she travelled to Florida to play with the Windjammers, a volunteer circus band whose performances included those with the Sailor Circus in Sarasota. Even when her eyesight began to fail, she was still able to play a couple of numbers, which she had memorized, in many concerts.

Left to honor her memory are her brothers: John Emmett Graves (Margery) of Grinnell and Jim Graves of Clovis, California; her sister, Martha Ann Chalupa (Carl), of Washington, Iowa; and nieces and nephews: Beth Lenz, Cheryl Mehta, Shawn Graves, Alayne Thiessen, Michael Graves, John Pollard, and LeeAnn Chalupa.

Mary Lu was preceded in death by her parents and one nephew, Jim Pollard.

The family wishes to thank the staff of Halcyon House for their compassionate care in the last year or so of Mary Lu's life.

Comments



“ So sorry for the loss of Mary Lu. I enjoyed playing with her in a couple local Des Moines bands. Even after her eyesight issues, she was a faithful audience member. Always enjoyed seeing her and know very well her love of music. Will miss her and please know your family is in my thoughts.

Steve Kuntz - May 04 at 09:02 PM



“ I still sing “hello Mrs. Graves” to my kids. She will always be in my memories.

allie christie - May 02 at 02:13 AM



“ Gail & Sharon Niffenegger lit a candle in memory of Mary Graves



Gail & Sharon Niffenegger - May 01 at 04:36 PM



“ So sorry for your loss. I worked at Cornell Elementary and taught with MaryLu for many years. She was a delight to work with. She will be missed.
JoAnn Curran

JoAnn Curran - May 01 at 11:56 AM