



Susan Mary Hegenbarth

September 8, 1932 - September 29, 2023

Susan Mary (Smith) Hegenbarth

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Susan Mary Hegenbarth, 91, died on September 29, 2023 in Overland Park, KS following a period of declining health. She previously resided in Door County, WI before moving to the Kansas City area in 2022 to be closer to family.

Susan Mary Smith was born September 8, 1932 in Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin to Ronald R. Smith and Ruth A. (Phillips) Smith. She grew up in the Beloit/Janesville, WI area; after high school she attended Miami University (Oxford, Ohio), receiving her BA in Art Education in 1954. While at Miami, she was a member of Alpha Chi Omega sorority and met her future husband Gordon Lawrence Hegenbarth on a Halloween blind date. Following graduation, Susan spent a year teaching in California sharing a house and fun with college friends.

Susan and Gordon married in 1955 in Middletown, OH. They first lived in Baltimore, MD before moving to Michigan, then Manhattan, NY, eventually settling in the Detroit, MI lakes area where they lived for many years and raised their two daughters. In Michigan they first lived in Milford, then built their “dream house” on Orchard Lake in the mid-1970s.

Susan was an accomplished lifelong artist. Her favorite medium was watercolor painting, but she also worked with printing, collage, pastels and other media. Favorite subjects included flowers, birds, and landscapes. In the 1970s, she was the Executive Director of the Pontiac, MI Creative Arts Center and wrote a weekly art review column for the Pontiac Press. She and Gordon greatly enjoyed their circle of Michigan friends and entertained frequently.

In 1983, Sue and Gordon moved to Rockford, IL where she was a co-founder of Gallery 10, a downtown Rockford art gallery. After keeping a sailboat in Wisconsin, they retired to Door County in 1991 where they sailed, entertained and enjoyed their many friendships for over 25 years. Their home in Baileys Harbor overlooked Lake Michigan and was the site of many special family gatherings, parties, and 4th of July fireworks celebrations.

Sue remained active in the arts, including teaching watercolor painting and volunteering at the nonprofit Hardy Gallery in Ephraim, WI. Her works including paintings, notecards and jewelry (“Watercolors to Wear”) were shown at galleries in Door County and the East Coast.

In addition to art Sue was very interested in nature, serving on the Board of Directors of The Ridges Sanctuary in Baileys Harbor from 2007-2011, including serving as Secretary from 2010-2011. She donated her artwork for The Ridges 60-year anniversary poster in 1997, as well as 10 years of “Ride for the Ridges” benefit T-shirts. She loved walking the lovely trails, boardwalks and beaches of this special place; many of her paintings featured the flora of this unique ecosystem.

In 2016 Sue and Gordon moved to Scandia Village in Sister Bay, WI, where she continued to paint, teach, and enjoy book and poetry clubs. Gordon died in 2021 after 66 years of marriage; after her own health declined she moved in

October 2022 to be closer to family. She was receiving hospice care and died peacefully at her residence in Overland Park, KS.

Friends and family remember Susan as a quiet lovely person and dear friend. Many own treasured artworks and loved receiving her handmade Christmas cards, a holiday tradition she carried on for over 60 years.

Susan is dearly missed by her surviving family including daughters Mary Hegenbarth of Kansas City, MO; Jane Korest (Phil) of Durham, NC; grandchildren David Korest and Emily Korest; sister Sarah Betts of Granger, IN and others. In accordance with her wishes no formal funeral is planned.

Our family would like to thank the wonderful caregivers and staff of SeniorCare Homes-New Canaan House, as well as Kansas City Hospice and Palliative Care.

Reflections Memorial Services in Kansas City, MO is assisting the family. Expressions of sympathy, memories and photos of Sue may be shared on her tribute page at www.reflectionsmemorialservices.com/obituaries.

Donations honoring Susan may be made to:

The Ridges Sanctuary-Hegenbarth Fund
8166 State Hwy 57
Baileys Harbor, WI 54202 920-839-2802
www.ridgessanctuary.org

Tribute Wall

BB

“ *Dear Mary and Jane~ Such a beautiful tribute to a life well lived! Just when I thought I knew Sue, now I know her better! Thank you! Sue is dearly missed! She made our lives so much richer, and lots more fun!!*

Bev Blietz - January 07, 2024 at 06:51 AM

MH

*Thank you Bev, much appreciated!
Mary*

Mary A Hegenbarth - January 09, 2024 at 02:25 PM

MA

“ *1 file added to the album Sue*



Mary - January 06, 2024 at 08:47 AM