



Judith Ann Harper

February 29, 1932 - October 14, 2020

A LIFE OF SERVICE:

JUDITH ANN HARPER (HEUSS)

With great sadness we acknowledge the loss of Judith Harper on October 14th, beloved wife, mother and grandmother. She passed peacefully at home, surrounded by family, after a brief period of rapidly declining health due to ALS.

Judith was born on Feb 29, 1932 and grew up on a farm near Greenville, Ohio. The third of four children from the marriage of Herman Heuss and Lucille Jenkins, she was their only daughter and learned the discipline and values of hard work in the challenging years of The Great Depression. In those years she learned to cope and compete with three brothers and stand up for herself - life skills that prepared her well for the opportunities and challenges ahead.

She graduated valedictorian of Union City High School and went on to become an honors graduate of Ball State Teachers College in Muncie, Indiana. In later years, she also completed a master's degree from the University of Iowa in Higher Education Administration.

She began her career as a primary school teacher. In 1955, she married Nile Harper, whom she had met in college and was then studying for the ministry at McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago. She became an active member of the Presbyterian Church in partnership with her husband, who became an ordained Presbyterian minister. Their 65-year marriage took them

from Indiana, to Chicago, to Lansing, then New York City, Iowa, Michigan and finally the Twin Cities.

Judith gave birth to three sons: Brian Nile, Steven Frederick and Jay Marshall Harper. In 1968 Jay, the youngest child, died from congenital liver problems. To overcome grief, Judith re-engaged in community service. She volunteered at a neighborhood community center, which then led to a job at the Big Brothers organization in New York City, recruiting mentors and role models for at-risk boys.

In 1971, the family moved from New York City to Dubuque, Iowa. She was invited to become Director of Financial Aid at the University of Dubuque. In that role, she became the first woman President of the Midwest Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (MASFAA), a body incorporating The Big Ten universities. She subsequently joined the University of Iowa Student Financial Aid Office, while completing her master's degree. After completion, she was invited to become Associate Director of Student Financial Aid at the University of Michigan. She and her husband moved to Ann Arbor. There she rose to become the Director of Student Financial Aid, managing a team of 50 staff and an aid budget of over \$250 million. She also became a prominent member of the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA). In 1997 she retired and in 2004 moved with her husband to Minneapolis to be closer to family.

Throughout her working life, she maintained an active role in in the Church.

She was ordained an Elder at Westminster Church in Dubuque, Iowa, and became the first woman elder elected to the church session. In Ann Arbor, she helped establish and organise the Peace-Making Council at the First Presbyterian Church, and was invited to consult on the budget for social justice action. In retirement, she became active in Westminster Presbyterian Church in Minneapolis, co-chairing the Bethlehem Partnership Committee for eight years, supporting educational programs in Bethlehem from elementary through to high school and university programs.

Judith was an avid reader and member of a book club, where her "soft

feminism" was a constant voice of challenge to the status quo. She was a wonderful cook and took great pride in teaching her sons to plan and prepare family meals in their teenage years. She endured the family's numerous pets with good humour. She cultivated beautiful flower gardens. She loved classical music and became a supporter of the Minnesota Symphony Orchestra in later life.

She is survived by her older brother Allan, husband Nile, two sons Brian (Cindy) and Steven, four grandchildren Jay (Alex), Katrina, Max and Alek and numerous nieces and nephews - all of whom will miss her kind and gentle manner, her dedication to family, to the service of others and her many achievements.

A memorial service will be held on Thursday 22nd October at 2pm at Westminster Presbyterian Church for immediate family only. The service will be live streamed, as well as archived for later viewing through following link: Westminstermpls.online.church

If you wish to contribute a remembrance for inclusion in the service, you can address those comments to:
sfhroaming@outlook.com

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations are requested and can be made to:

Bright Stars of Bethlehem NFP - brightstarsbethlehem.org

P.O. Box 771055, Chicago, IL 60677-1055

The ALS Association - webmn.alsa.org

1919 University Avenue West, Suite 175, St. Paul, MN 55104

Tribute Wall



“ *Dear Nile,
Our thoughts are with you from all of us at International House Ann Arbor, formerly ECIR/ECC. May you be well and comforted.*

Lauren Zinn - January 05, 2021 at 12:00 AM