



Ruth Marie Sylte

March 10, 1960 - January 12, 2024

Ruth Marie Sylte, aged 63, died peacefully in her home around January 11-12, 2024, with her faithful companion dog Runa by her side. Family and friends grieve her sudden and unexpected death, causes unknown.

A memorial for Ruth will be held on Friday, February 9, 2024, at Mindekirken Norwegian Lutheran Memorial Church in South Minneapolis with visitation at 5PM and service at 6PM.

Ruth was born on 10 March 1960 in Minneapolis/St. Paul, the first child of Rev. Leonard Vernon Sylte and Agnes Karoline Hansen Sylte. The family moved several times until arriving in Nashville, TN early in her primary years. Ruth attended school there, graduating from Father Ryan High School in 1978. She then headed north to St. Olaf College in Northfield, MN, to study religion and political science. Ruth, a coloratura soprano, shared her gift of music singing in the Manitou Singers and Chapel Choir at the college. St. Olaf was a huge influence on Ruth's life as she formed many lifelong friendships, traveled to the Middle East which resulted in a love of international studies, and started her connection with everything Norwegian. Ruth's first job following graduation in 1982 was with the admissions department where she encouraged students to learn at the college she loved.

A varied career path and personal relationships took her from Northfield to the Middle East, then to the Twin Cities. She moved on to California (La Jolla, Irvine, and Palo Alto), then back to Northfield, finally settling back in Minneapolis. While she loved Norway and the Middle East, Minnesota was

always her home. Her passion for higher education and international study led her to work in admissions counseling and as an international studies coordinator. She later became a contractor in project management.

Ruth's passions were well known among her friends. In her later years, she adopted an Icelandic Sheepdog named Runa who became her faithful companion in life. She loved dogs and owned two huskies before adopting Runa. Ruth's love of Norwegian culture led her to hardanger fiddling and Norwegian folkdancing. She travelled to Norway to dance with her dance partner Mikel. Ruth was an early-adapter of social media, using it to share her opinions on liberal politics, women's equality, and the church. Ruth shared her leadership skills by serving on church committees and community boards wherever she lived. She was planning to go on the advisory counsel at her senior living community in the coming year.

Ruth is survived by her dog Runa (now with her designated alternate caregiver), her brother Mark Iver Sylte and his wife Hsiaoling Chung, their children Alexandra Kristiana, Leandra Celeste, Karstan Bjorne, and Cedrik Thorstein, as well as numerous cousins on both the Sylte and Hansen sides of the family in Florida, New York, Minnesota, the Dakotas, Canada and Norway.

Though Ruth did not leave any indications of a preferred charity, her passions were well known to her friends. Donations are preferred, in lieu of flowers, to the charity of your choice.

Tribute Wall

DF

“ My sister and I would often visit with Ruth at The Contented Cow in Northfield, MN. She learned all about her Norwegian heritage and taught others about it as well. She loved working with students and traveling for work. She always had many stories to share. She was an eloquent speaker who felt very passionately about various causes.

Ruth loved life and poured her whole heart into everything she tried. She loved her dogs and ours as well. She would run out and visit with them any time we walked by.

Although we lost touch with her when she left Northfield we thought of many times. She left a positive impact on all those she encountered. Heaven will be a better place now that she is there.

Debbie Fiebiger - February 19, 2024 at 03:08 AM

MF

“ I am so saddened to hear about the loss of Ruth. I met her when she lived in Northfield. She would occasionally frequent The Contented Cow and a group of us would have wonderful visits. My sister and I immediately formed a bond with her because of her love for dogs. She spoke of her two precious dogs, in her former relationship. She said that she had to be away from them and it broke her heart. Sadly, we lost touch when she moved to the twin cities, but I am so glad to know that she had her beautiful faithful companion with her. What a beautiful fur baby and obviously a great friend to her!

Just looking at that picture, and seeing her beautiful smile, reminds me of how she touched the lives of every person she met. She was petite in stature but she had spunk and determination of a giant. She was so intelligent, insightful and well spoken. Ruth had a kind heart the size of Minnesota, at least. She really fits the image of someone who would give the last shirt off of her back to help a friend in need. She was so talented. Probably, workwise, she was similar to a cat who had nine lives, as she did a little bit of everything and succeeded at anything, career-wise, that she tried.

She was a treasure and one of a kind. She will always remain forever in our hearts. It is so sad that we don't sometimes get to tell how much we admire and respect someone until they are gone. I will always feel so sad that we lost touch, as our friendship still endures. Mary F.

Mary Fiebiger - February 18, 2024 at 08:29 PM

SJ

“ My sister, Ruth Marie Sylte, was a remarkable woman whom I'll always cherish. My Norwegian American husband and I met her at a Norwegian folk dance camp in the Telemark region of Norway. The folk dance camp combined cross-country skiing. That was in 1993 and we were friends forever. She was on the cross-country ski path reading a Norwegian novel (in Norwegian, of course, as she was fluent in Norwegian). Who does that? So my husband and I approached her and asked her what in the world was she doing. My husband and I fell in love with her right then and there. Like my husband, she was a proud Minnesotan and Norwegian American. She was a kind soul. All we wanted for her was to be happy. I prayed every single day that she would be happy because I loved her so. I only hope that her last days were filled with love and appreciation. I wish I were there to hold her hand and tell her how much the Jacobsens loved her. She was kind to our son who suffered from daily bullying. This made me love her all the more. She always opened her home to us Jacobsens.

Ruth Marie, my only regret in having you as my friend is that I wasn't with you during your final days. I'm still crying a day after hearing of your passing. You left an indelible imprint on my heart. God holds you now and tells you that you did good work while on this earth.

You were a gift to me. You inspired me to learn Norwegian at the adult camp of Skogfjorden. And I will one day.

Ruth Marie, you were my sister from another mother and another father. You were my forever friend.

I love you. I miss you.

Scherri Jacobsen - February 18, 2024 at 09:51 AM

ME

“ I just learned of Ruth’s passing. Ruth and I met in either 2nd or 3rd grade (we couldn’t remember which) at Eakin Elementary in Nashville and became fast friends. We lost touch after my family moved away. Ruth and I reconnected a few years ago after I saw a comment she had made on a Facebook page we both followed. I recognized her name and sent her a message. I really enjoyed learning about her life in the years when we were apart. My deepest condolences to her family and friends in their loss, which came much too early.

Mary Eldredge - February 17, 2024 at 11:02 PM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Ruth Marie Sylte.



February 08, 2024 at 02:43 PM

LM

“ Langan Farms - Pat, Mary, Jack, Mike planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Ruth Marie Sylte.

Langan Farms - Pat, Mary, Jack, Mike - February 08, 2024 at 02:43 PM

ET

“Ruth had a curious spirit, a sharp mind, and a tender heart. We worked at UCI together in the study abroad office. She had boundless energy, and was interested in so many things. She helped bring new ideas to the office in terms of technology and outreach. She was so passionate about life -- all the time -- that it was impossible not to take some of that energy with me every day. It's clear she was like that for so many people, wherever she went. I'll miss her.

Erin T - February 07, 2024 at 11:22 PM

AH

“Ruth energized everyone around her. I remember volunteering with her at the Minneapolis NAFSA conference (2007?) and recall how hard she worked. I loved that she had so many personal interests. Blessings to you, Ruth

Ann Hubbard - February 07, 2024 at 09:19 AM

JL

“Our sympathies to Mark and family, all of the Sylte cousins, and Ruth's friends. We are very happy Ruth was able to stay with us a few years ago here in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada for a Canadian-American-Norwegian Sylte reunion. She had lots of family history knowledge and enthusiasm. We had hoped we could have more visits in the future. James Lokken (second cousin) for the Canadian relatives.

James Lokken - February 07, 2024 at 09:13 AM

 Julia
Ludden

“*Ruth was so full of vim and vigor that it's hard to imagine anything else. I haven't been in touch with her for years, but we worked closely together when NAFSA (our biggest annual study abroad conference) came to the twin cities back in the mid 00's. She walked around with some kind of wooden instrument that made a reasonably accurate loon call; it drove everyone crazy, but she just laughed and kept going. A few of us still giggle about it.*

I smile when I think of Ruth, and I guess that's the best legacy any of us can hope for.

Julia Ludden - February 06, 2024 at 05:56 PM

RA

“*I knew Ruth for more than 40 years, going back to her days as the Red Headed Goddess of soc.culture.Nordic on Usenet. We connected in person when we both were living in SoCal. And reconnected when we both ended up in Minnesota. She was incredibly passionate about the things she cared about, from feminist and liberal politics to all things Norwegian. That's what drew me to her more than anything - that sense of commitment.*

Rich Ahrens - February 06, 2024 at 05:06 PM

SP

“*I met Ruth through international education and admired her expertise on technology, but what I treasure most is our friendship. Ruth always remembered our shared interest in Scandinavia, wishing me a happy Syttende Mai, and I could also count on her to send an occasional curling-related joke or news (knowing that I am a curler). I will miss her.*

Søren Peterson - February 06, 2024 at 12:12 PM

KO

“ I am so sad to learn about this. Ruth was part of my very first professional conference presentation, back in 1996, and I had kept up with her on facebook. She will be deeply missed.

Kurt Olausen - February 06, 2024 at 10:03 AM

DK

“ I just heard the sad news! This is a great loss for the world! Ruth's dynamic style and high energy made every project I connected with her seem to gain power and impact with her expertise! May we all live life with half as much gusto and meaning as Ruth.

Deborah Knaust - February 06, 2024 at 02:59 AM



“ Such heartbreaking news. I truly appreciated Ruth's insightful commentary, helpfulness and genuine love for all things internationally. She will be missed terribly. Robert Carolin

Robert Carolin - February 06, 2024 at 01:59 AM

MR

“ It was sad to learn of Ruth's passing. I didn't know her well, but our paths crossed many times over the years through our shared work in international education. Her dynamic personality left an impression and our encounters were always enjoyable. She was a generous professional, willing to share her skills and talents where needed. Gone too soon.

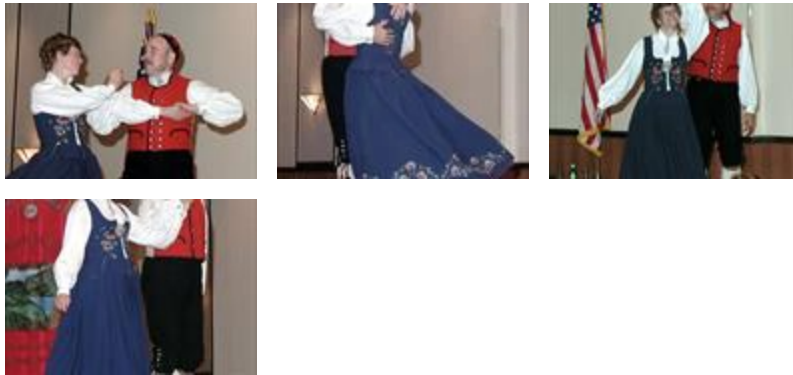
Margaret Riley - February 03, 2024 at 08:26 PM

MT

“ *Kjære / Dear Ruth.*

Such good memories of times shared. We met in the San Francisco Bay Area, CA, in the 90s, when you moved there and started to dance Norwegian folk dance. Dancing, performing music, especially with your beautiful voice & bunad (Norwegian folk costume) from Romsdal, with the Nordahl Grieg Leikarring, the Nordic Revels, and other social events. Because of your passion for hardingfele music, you got involved with HFAA. Then with your passion for performing, we developed into the performing duo called “Hjertedans”, performing at Norsk Høstfest in Minot and traveling throughout the USA and Canada. Your skill at writing grants got us financing, but most of all, your stage presence, utilizing your public speaking skills, wit and charming smile. We were a team. Those memories will not fade.

Klem, Hugs, Mikkel Thompson



Mikkel Thompson - February 02, 2024 at 04:52 PM

MK

“ My husband and I met Ruth at a dance practice of Det norske folkedanslaget, which was taking place at Mindekirken, in Minneapolis. Then we crossed paths again, singing at musical events at Mindekirken, then later, the Christmas choir which performed at the Faribault Prison. Ruth's dancing and singing were breath-taking. We so enjoyed her performances, and also her leading roles in local theater. What a powerhouse! Ruth joined forces with other Scandinavian musicians and enthusiasts to form the Nordic Jam, a gathering of musicians which continues to this day at The Contented Cow, in Northfield, MN. She also arranged visits by performing artists. Her efforts have touched so many lives, and I am so grateful. On a personal note, she and her Huskies introduced me to Skikjøring and one of the most hilarious winters I can remember, here on the farm. Ruth also stood by me in my mother's final days. Although much of that time is a blur for me, I remember Ruth's steady presence as she walked me through the tough places. My condolences to Ruth's friends and family. May she rest in peace. Mary Klockeman

Mary Klockeman - February 01, 2024 at 01:45 PM