



Susan R. Rogers

October 13, 1942 - April 11, 2023

Susan Gorham Rogers, formerly of Carlisle, died on Tuesday, April 11 2023, at Brookview Skilled Nursing Center, Menno Haven, Chambersburg. She was eighty years old.

Her smile lit up the world. For her, all people were children of God and worthy of respect, and because of this belief she moved with ease and grace among people from all walks of life and from all backgrounds. Her smile drew you immediately into her presence and you quickly adopted her gentle and loving point of view. She was never fussy, and it would never occur to her to complain about people, even people who were obviously incompetent, for she was sure they were doing the best they could and, after all, we did not know their circumstances. Her way of seeing things could disarm the most aggressive of bullies. She loved little things, often simple, insignificant things, and she celebrated them . All were worthy of her attention.

Susan was born in Windsor, Vermont, on October 13, 1942, the younger daughter of William Gorham and Ruth Allen Gorham. She was proud of her Vermont origins - maple syrup, for a start -- and thirteen was always her lucky number. She spent most of her youth living in the Northampton, Massachusetts area, attending Northampton public schools. Hers was in so many ways an idyllic childhood. Along with her older sister, Patty Anita, and her two younger brothers, Timothy and Peter, and their friends, she whiled away her summer days playing in the near-by woods and fields or wading in the icy Berkshire streams. All of her life, she fondly recalled playing with paper

dolls with her cousin, Karen. Her sister organized a "Good Children's Club," of which Susan was, of course, an upstanding member. At one point, her father operated a small farm near Williamsburg and raised goats, and Susan always retained a soft spot for goats. Until recently, she would still take a drive in the country just to see them.

Susan entered Smith College in 1960 as an Ada Comstock Scholar and was graduated from there with Honors in English Literature in 1964. She then married a high school classmate, Barry Langdon, and accompanied him to California where he was studying at UCLA and lived at Venice Beach during the heady 1960s. Together they had a son, Timothy, born in 1967, who when the marriage was dissolved, returned with Susan to Williamsburg. She then married another high school classmate, Richard Howland, a mathematics professor, and traveled with him, first to Franklin and Marshall College, and then to Dickinson College, where he passed away suddenly in 1983.

Susan always believed that her job as a secretary to the Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs, Susan Nichols, saved her life. Rather than return home after the death of her husband, as she was encouraged to do, she remained in Carlisle and became an integral member of the Dickinson College community. She was known for her proof-reading skills and her insistence on correct grammar and appropriate usage. At Dickinson, she also met her future husband, John Rogers, a professor of English at Shippensburg University, whom she loved dearly. They were married in 1989 in their garden.

She and John lived in a solitary chestnut log house in a clearing on North Mountain, west of Newville. They prized their quiet life with their cats, their gardens, and the natural world at their doorstep. In the spring, there were thousands of daffodils, Susan's favorite flower. During the summer months, they would live on their screened porch. They would eat their supper there and then go for a stroll in the garden, and as the night settled in around them they would curl up together on the sofa and enjoy the darkness, the sounds of the night, the crickets, the owls, and the lightning bugs.

In the early 1990s, Susan retired from Dickinson and returned to her avocation as a water colorist. Since childhood, she had enjoyed art and demonstrated a talent for it, and for the next twenty years, Susan produced dozens of paintings, all demonstrating her discriminating eye and her steady hand. She set very high standards for herself, and she was not content until she met them. Again, she often chose little, "unimportant" subjects and liked to give her paintings to the person who first encouraged her to do them. For example, she painted a whole series of water colors on the fruits and vegetables she bought from her fruttivendolo in the market in Florence, Italy. They were all so beautiful in her eyes [the farmer who grew them was handsome, too]. She, of course, painted the famous cupola of the cathedral in Florence, but it did not quite inspire her the way a bunch of carrots or radishes did. Her and John's trip to India and Nepal in 1999 set off a whole series of large paintings - of village women, elephants bathing, colorful saris drying in the sunshine -- but her most ambitious, and one of her most successful paintings, was one of a tiger she saw in the wild while she was riding atop an elephant.

From 2002 to 2018, Susan and John lived for a few months every year in Florence. They learned Italian - Susan obsessed about the grammar -- they had numerous good friends, and they loved their daily life there. Every year they hosted an American Thanksgiving dinner for their Italian friends. They traveled around Italy -- they were always going to Venice -- and visited with friends in England, Iceland, and Denmark. She and John could never have been more happy. The world was theirs.

All of that came to a sudden halt when Susan's son, Timothy, died unexpectedly in July 2017, a few weeks shy of his fiftieth birthday. Life in Florence was never quite the same again, nor life in general, and she and John began to experience ill health. They moved to Menno Haven in

Chambersburg in 2021.

It never seemed to occur to Susan how beautiful she was, both physically and spiritually. She was just "being herself," she would say. She was happy and generous with people. She could charm people waiting for a bus in Florence! She loved her clothes, but seemingly never considered if what she was wearing was "appropriate." Even in the last days of her life, her skin remained youthful and luminescent. Susan was a rare and wonderful woman. We were all fortunate for having known her.

She is survived by her husband, John E. Rogers, brothers Peter Gorham and Timothy Gorham, and by numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins.

A memorial service will be held in Susan's memory at the Stern Center,
Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania at 11AM June 3, 2023
Memorial contributions may be made to the Bosler Memorial Library, 158 W.
High St., Carlisle, Pa. 17013

Previous Events

Memorial Service

JUN 3. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Bosler Memorial Library
158 W. High St.
Carlisle, PA 17013

Tribute Wall

FR

“ Ricordiamo con piacere e affetto i giorni passati con Susan (e John) qui a Firenze e le tante occasioni che ci hanno visto trascorrere insieme piacevoli momenti. La ricordiamo per esempio per i piatti americani che ci ha cucinato, in particolare a Thanksgiving: la ricordiamo anche - e soprattutto - per il suo splendido hobby che l'ha portata a creare deliziosi quadri e disegni. Sempre ricorderemo il suo viso sorridente e l'abbraccio accogliente con cui ci riceveva nell'appartamento di Borgo Pinti. In questo momento vorremmo essere vicini a John per ricordarla insieme, ma non potendolo fare, lo abbracciamo da Firenze - che tanto ha amato - con profondo affetto. Susan rimarrà nei nostri cuori.
Massimo, Elisiana, Alberto, Anna

Famiglia Rinaldi - April 22, 2023 at 08:35 AM

EB

“ ciao Susan, abbiamo condiviso con te e John una bella parte della nostra vita in Firenze, Toscana, Italia e....in tanto Mondo. TUTTI noi abbracciamo te e John con tutto il cuore.
Ciao bella



Elena Grasso Ballerini - April 20, 2023 at 06:16 AM

SS

“ Susan was a gentle and thoughtful woman who radiated kindness. We and our sons had many ever-memorable stays with her and John in Florence, and it was obvious how much joy she brought to him. We embrace our dear friend John in this time of great sadness, and are so grateful to him for all the times that he shared her with us.

sandra and martin stevens - April 19, 2023 at 02:59 PM

MA

“ *How sad is knowing that Susan is not with us any more.
I met Susan and John in 2022 in Florence and since that year we all
were looking forward for Fall, the time Susan and John were in
Florence for 3-4 months.
Sweet memories of our time together: nice converstions about
education, art, politics, life both in English and Italian Films at the
Cinema Odeon, art exhibits, lunch and dinners either at home -
eating family food - or out.
I remember Susan saying how grateful she was for such a
wonderful experience
I'm grateful I met Susan, such a sweet, gentle person.
Me and my son Guido will miss her. We'll save her precious
memory in our heart.
Mariangela e Guido*

Mariangela - April 18, 2023 at 06:04 PM