



Reba Suanne Walker

July 26, 1941 - March 20, 2024

Reba Suanne Smith Walker was born July 26, 1941, in Jonesboro, Arkansas. She passed to her eternal reward Wednesday, March 20, 2024 as a result of the serious health issues that had severely limited her the last several years. She was 82.

Suanne was the oldest of five children born to Buel and Jolene Smith. She was preceded in death her parents, her sister, Beth Smith, and brother, Rick Smith. Her sister, Kay (Jim) Gowen of Searcy, Arkansas, her brother, Steve (Carol) Smith of Evanston, Illinois, and sister-in-law, Eva Archer-Smith of Houston, Texas, survive her. Suanne's role as the oldest child made a lifetime impact — she continued her responsible, caretaking, high-achieving, hard-working, rule-following traits throughout her life.

Suanne attended school in Pocahontas, Arkansas, through the 7th grade when the family moved to Corning, Arkansas, where she graduated from high school in 1959. She was valedictorian of her class and a National Merit Semi-Finalist when she enrolled at Harding College in Searcy that year. While at Harding, she was a proud member of Belles & Beaux, Uncle Bud's A Capella Chorus, Chorale, and Kappa Phi social club. She graduated magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Science degree in Vocational Home Economics in 1963.

Suanne met Charles Walker at Harding and they married in 1962 in Corning. As newlyweds, they spent the summer as counselors at Camp Wyldewood. Other than brief stints for post-graduate education in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, and Oxford, Mississippi, they spent their lives in Searcy, teaching hundreds of students, raising their three children, spoiling their grandchildren, and faithfully worshipping at the College church. Charles preceded her in death in 2002. They had three children – all of whom survive her – Chris (Lynnita) Walker of Searcy; Joanna (Scott) Raynes of Houston, Texas; and Jennifer Floyd of Searcy. Her cherished grandchildren are Jonathan Walker, Jessica (Paden) Timms, Joshua Walker, and Julia Walker; Sarah Grace Raynes, Caroline Raynes, and William Raynes; Emma Floyd, Hannah Floyd, and Weston Floyd. Great-grandchildren are Henry and Jasper Timms.

Graduate degrees in Child Development and Family Relationships from the University of Illinois and in Early Childhood Education from Harding prepared Suanne for a lifetime as a teacher. Education, especially early childhood, was her passion. Throughout her 37-year teaching career, she taught every grade from Pre-K through graduate school, including special education. But her most enduring role was as beloved kindergarten teacher “Mrs. Walker” at Riverview’s Judsonia Elementary School from 1976 to 2001. Following retirement from full-time teaching, she served in various capacities as a reading teacher, adjunct instructor, early childhood consultant, grant reviewer, and advanced trainer. She was honored by Harding University’s College of Education with the Outstanding Alumnus Award in 2001.

Her professional memberships included Alpha Chi, Omicron Nu, Cambridge, Southern Early Childhood Association, Arkansas Early Childhood Association, Mid-Arkansas Early Childhood

Association, Arkansas Advocator for Children and Families, Child Care, and CASA (Court-Appointed Special Advocate).

Suanne's faith permeated everything she did and all her relationships. She was selfless and generous to a fault. Her beautiful warm smile and welcoming nature radiated her desire to host and make you feel at home. Her ability to find ways to serve others was matched only by her multiple talents. Suanne was a talented soprano, an amazing cook, a renowned baker, a master seamstress, an expert floral designer, and an avid reader. Numerous sourdough starters she shared are currently in use throughout Searcy and beyond. She donated her flower arranging skills to the College church, her bread making skills to teams at Harding Academy, and her tender care of children to cradle roll at College church and CASA. In 2001, despite the physical limitations she was starting to endure, she took her service skills overseas when she joined a mission team from College church and went to Zambia to teach Vacation Bible School. Joined by her daughter, Jennifer, she returned to Zambia in 2002 to continue teaching children.

Nothing made her happier than to be called "Mom," "Granny," or "Grinny," whether you were actually related to her or not. It was her proudest and best-served role. Suanne's children and grandchildren were the joy of her life and she dedicated herself to them. She could be found singing innumerable lullabies; reading countless stories; baking mountains of bread for basketball and football team dinners; sewing costumes for school projects and special occasions, curtains and bedding for nurseries, and tablecloths for birthday parties; decorating for and assisting with every holiday and celebration; hosting her annual Easter egg hunt; and making piles of French Toast, bacon and cinnamon rolls for breakfast whenever they were around. She avidly supported their varied interests and attended as many as she could, health permitting. Whether it was football, softball, baseball, basketball, volleyball, or field hockey games, ballet or piano recitals, or school programs, plays, presentations, or concerts, "Granny" was your #1 fan and knew how to make

you feel important and loved. She loved well and was dearly loved.

Suanne was a devoted member of the College Church of Christ in Searcy for 65 years. A memorial in her honor will take place at the College church on Saturday, April 13, at 11:00 a.m., preceded by a visitation at 10:00 a.m. A private family burial will take place at 2:00 p.m. at Oak Grove Cemetery in Searcy, where she will be laid to rest alongside her husband, Charles, and sister, Beth.

Donations in her memory may be made to the Charles R. Walker AMA Scholarship, Harding University Advancement Office, 915 E. Market Ave., Box 12238, Searcy, AR 72149 or the Arkansas Early Childhood Association, P.O. Box 4291, Fayetteville, AR 72702.

Cemetery Details

Oak Grove Cemetery

Moore St.
Searcy, AR 72143

Previous Events

Visitation

APR **13**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

College Church Of Christ
712 E Race Ave
Searcy, AR 72143-4421
(501) 268-7156

Memorial Service

APR **13**. 11:00 AM (CT)

College Church Of Christ
712 E Race Ave
Searcy, AR 72143-4421
(501) 268-7156

Tribute Wall

JF

“ I met Suanne through a friend and started cleaning her house. She became a very special person to me. I started dating someone during this time and Charles and Suanne came to know him. When we decided to get married, Suanne and Charles did everything including Charles performing the only marriage ceremony he ever performed. They made Mike and me feel so special. I will never forget her. God bless you Suanne. My heart goes out to your family.

Jacqueline Ford - April 13, 2024 at 12:45 AM



“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Reba Suanne Walker.



April 12, 2024 at 01:19 PM

PM

“ Paige & Sean Merino purchased the Basket of Memories for the family of Reba Suanne Walker.



Paige & Sean Merino - April 11, 2024 at 10:32 PM

LC

“ Love, Bill and Camille purchased the Serene Retreat for the family of Reba Suanne Walker.



Love, Bill and Camille - April 11, 2024 at 05:26 PM

RU

“ Chris, JoAnna (with a Capital A), Jennifer. Y'all were given such a beautiful Mom. She had a unique empathy for every person and a way of making understanding eye contact from across a room. I am sorry and know Suanne will be missed.
Rusty

Rusty - April 08, 2024 at 03:50 AM