



## Mrs. Ruth Phelps

January 3, 1938 - January 5, 2022

Ruth Mary Rolfes Phelps passed away peacefully at her home in St. George Village in Roswell, Georgia on Wednesday, January 5, 2022.

Ruth was born January 3, 1938 at her parents' home near Le Mars, Iowa. She was one of the twelve children of Frank and Ida Rolfes. She attended Liberty Consolidated School near Merrill, Iowa and graduated from Akron, Iowa High School. She is also a graduate of Wayne State College in Wayne, Nebraska and received her M.A. and Ph.D. from Miami University in Oxford, OH.

Ruth began her teaching career in Bellevue, Nebraska. She taught elementary school at various grades for a few years and then spent most of her career as the head librarian and media specialist for Liberty Elementary School and later Heritage Elementary School, both near Cincinnati, OH. Ruth was also an adjunct professor of Library Science at Xavier University in Cincinnati, OH.

For over 40 years, she was a leader with the Gamma Xi chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma, an international society focused on developing leading women educators. For many of those 40+ years she served in formal leadership roles including Treasurer and separately Vice President in charge of programs.

After retirement, Ruth became an active volunteer with multiple organizations including The Aronoff Center for the Arts in Cincinnati, St. John's Catholic Church, Whiz Kids and others.

Ruth was married to Lynn Phelps and is survived by their son Brad Phelps of Atlanta, Georgia along with Brad's wife Kristen and their children Ryan and McKenna. Ruth is also survived by her brothers Gene of Phoenix, Arizona, Stan of Akron, Iowa and sisters Paula Winker of Celebration, Florida, Clarice Wilken of Akron, Iowa and Pat Christensen of Marshalltown, Iowa.

Ruth was preceded in death by her parents and brothers Isadore, Daniel, Virgil, C.J., Robert and Lee.

Ruth will be remembered for her love of family and her quiet yet significant accomplishments as an educator and librarian. Her humility and sensitivity to the needs of others along with her willingness to contribute helped define her. She always thought of others first. After moving to Atlanta shortly after Ryan's birth, Ruth loved every minute she

spent with her grandkids and thoroughly enjoyed always bringing new books to read with them. Her dedication to her religious faith was an inspiration to her family and friends. A memorial service will be held at St. Peter Chanel Catholic Church in Roswell, Georgia at 2:00 pm ET on Friday January 14th.

The service will be livestreamed via

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y\\_Qgfr5N2kg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y_Qgfr5N2kg)

Her funeral service will take place on Saturday, July 30, 2022 at St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Akron, Iowa and burial following in St. Patrick's Cemetery in Akron.

In Lieu of Flowers, donations may be made in Ruth's memory to either of the following:

St. John's Catholic Church in Cincinnati, Ohio

<https://stjohnwc.weshareonline.org/>

The Winship Cancer Institute at Emory University:

<https://winshipcancer.emory.edu/support-winship/give/index.html>

# Cemetery

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## Cremation - Northside Chapel Crematory

12050 Crabapple Road  
Roswell, GA,

# Events

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<b>JAN</b>	<b>Memorial Service</b>	<b>02:00PM</b>
<b>14</b>	<hr/>	
	St. Peter Chanel Catholic Church	
	11330 Woodstock Road, Roswell, GA,	
	US	

# Comments

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“ An external video has been added.



**Northside Chapel** - January 13 at 07:52 AM

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“ A webcast video has been added.



**Northside Chapel** - January 13 at 07:17 AM

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“ I knew Ruth as a Delta Kappa Gamma sister in her time with us in West Chester OH. We were both teachers in the Lakota Local School District at that time. Ruth was serving as the school librarian at that time, while I was teaching children with special needs in different schools in the district. I was always impressed with her quiet demeanor. However, as her photo shows, she had plenty of sparkle and a gentle sense of humor that endeared her with the students as well as with her colleagues. I'll always remember Ruth with a smile on my face.

Becky Leighty

**Florence B, Leighty** - January 12 at 04:27 PM

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“ One of the many things I remember about my sister Ruth is her love of family. She loved our yearly family reunions and only missed one in the 40+ years reunions were held and that was because of the birth of her grandson Ryan. For several years she drove to Iowa for our reunions and would have a stopover at my house before continuing on her trip. Spending time with all our family was important to her. Making sure she had a good visit with everyone was important to her. Ruth was loving and genuine and always reached out to help or encourage us. My kids enjoyed her visits. After Ruth received her doctorate, my son Matt lovingly call her Dr. Ruth. My daughter Nichole followed in her footsteps and became a teacher. Ruth was loved by all who knew her. Memories of her will always be a treasure. Sending my love to Brad, Kristen and her precious grandchildren.  
Pat Christensen

**Patricia Mary Christensen** - January 12 at 04:17 PM

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## “ Remembering my big Sis, Ruth by Paula Winker

When I was little, maybe around four or so, I remember my older sister Ruth as my little mother. She made sure that I said my prayers every night, on my knees beside the bed. Saying prayers while lying in bed was out of the question.

As we grew older and were expected to help with chores around the house, Ruth was there to make sure I swept thoroughly under the beds and shook out the rugs properly.

Ruth was also there with me when we got on the school bus to go to Liberty Consolidated School. She set a good example when the elementary students were expected to do a basketball relay at the half time of the high school basketball games. We had to dribble the length of the court, shoot the basketball at the basket until it went in, then dribble back across the court. My mantra was “If Ruth can do it, I can do it”.

Later she led the way as we transferred from the small Catholic grade school in Akron to the public high school. Following in her footsteps made the transition easier. She played girls basketball and then I also played girls basketball. Upon graduation from high school, Ruth enrolled at the Nebraska State Teachers College at Wayne. Guess where I went. Having spent a weekend with Ruth and her friends in Neihardt Hall at Wayne, my moving in as a freshman was very comfortable.

Ruth started her teaching career in Bellvue, Nebraska and later transferred to Storm Lake, Iowa. I started my teaching career in Sioux City, Iowa and later transferred to Storm Lake where we shared an apartment with two other teachers. One of the experiences of that time was being glued to the TV following the assassination of President Kennedy in 1963,

During this time in Storm Lake we each met our husbands, were married, and our lives seemed to go in separate directions. We were both continuing our education along different pathways. I admire Ruth’s commitment to obtaining her PhD and her many contributions to education and library science.

Many years passed during which we continued to gather at our annual Rolfes family reunion which Ruth was instrumental in organizing. In 1997 the four sisters, Ruth, Paula, Clarice and Pat, decided to get together in Boca Raton, Florida for the first of our Sisters Reunions. We wanted to have time for just the sisters. Thus, for each of the next twenty years the four sisters traveled somewhere to be together. Our destinations included Cincinnati, Branson, Mo., Black Hills, Okoboji, Omaha, Atlanta and San Francisco.

Ruth loved to travel. I was fortunate to join her for two excursions. We traveled together to Machu Picchu with my friends, Jane and Gary. We also celebrated Ruth’s 80th birthday together in Hawaii with her son Brad and his wife, Kristen. Ruth approached travel as an educational experience and the information she shared enriched the adventure.

I always felt that Ruth was available to support me when I was experiencing a loss or disappointment and I am eternally grateful for her presence and support. I do not feel that I was as available to support her during her difficult times and am sorry for this failure. I will always remember Ruth's humility and practicality and hope to honor her memory and example she set for all of us.

**Paula R Winker** - January 12 at 12:48 PM

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“ Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Mrs. Ruth Phelps.



January 12 at 11:53 AM

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“ Ruth was special to so many. Her sweet, quiet, loving manner reflected her love of Christ. I knew her as a mother of children she taught, a fellow teacher, and a sister in the Gamma Xi Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma.. She was a leader who supported others in their efforts to do their best, while not trying to be in the limelight herself. She is so special.

**Julia Miller** - January 12 at 08:14 AM

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“ I only knew Ruth for a short amount of time compared to many of you and I really only saw her maybe twice a year. But I really enjoyed our conversations together. I was also an educator and loved chatted to her about the ups and downs of the teaching world. Kristen and Ruth came over to my house for tea and cake just after she moved to Roswell and it was such a lovely afternoon. She really lite up taking about her grandson who was a few months old at the time. I loved her warm and gentle spirit. Praying for you all during this time Phelps family.

**Desiree Gregory** - January 11 at 03:00 PM

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“ Brian, Craig, Angela, Tim and families purchased the Garden Accent - A heart of gold stopped beating... for the family of Mrs. Ruth Phelps.



**Brian, Craig, Angela, Tim and families** - January 10 at 11:24 PM

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“ Ruth was a treasured friend and outstanding educator. Children grew to love reading because of her library work, showing her love of reading. I treasure beautiful memories of her at Miami University and in Delta Kappa Gamma. She gave much to many. My condolences to her family. Dr. Kay Walla, Sister in Gamma Xi

**Dr. Kay Walla** - January 08 at 04:16 PM



“ I enjoyed hearing from Ruth at Christmas when among other things she said she loved being near family and especially her grandchildren. What a shock to hear she has passed away. Our condolences Brad and family. She will be missed by many.  
Lynn and Kerry Scott

**Lynn and Kerry Scott** - January 09 at 07:58 PM



“ The Olsen family shares in your sorrow in the loss of Ruth, your mother and grandmother. She was a fantastic lady who gave so much of herself in all she did. What an honor to know her and learn from her over the years. She will be missed and her memories treasured by so many!

**Angela Olsen** - January 10 at 11:18 PM