



Darlene Ruth (Briggs) Bratek

August 2, 1923 - May 1, 2016

Darlene Ruth Briggs Bratek, one of the first woman journalism educators to teach at the University of Missouri-Columbia, died early Sunday morning, May 1, at the Meadowood Health Pavilion.

She moved to Bloomington, Indiana, 10 years ago to be near family, having lived in Columbia, Missouri, where she worked much of her life.

Ruth was born Aug. 2, 1923, in Shawnee, Oklahoma, to Frank P. and Catherine (Shull) Briggs, and lived most of her childhood years in Macon, Missouri, where her family owned and published the Macon Chronicle-Herald.

Survivors include her daughter, Catherine J. (Jack) Dvorak of Bloomington; one grandson, John T. (Jennifer) Dvorak of Tempe, Arizona; and one great-grandchild, Jackson T. Dvorak, also of Tempe. Former husband Joseph T. Bratek predeceased her in 1978, and her second husband, Earl W. Douglass, died in 1998 after three years of marriage. She was also predeceased by two brothers, Tom and Gene Briggs, and two sisters, Dorothy Ramon and Betty B. Briggs.

Ruth was salutatorian of her 1941 high school class in Macon, and after her freshman year at Central Methodist College, she transferred to the University of Missouri where she earned her bachelor's degree in Journalism (1945). She later earned a master's degree in Journalism (1964).

In 1956, she joined the faculty of the Missouri School of Journalism. She was the first woman to serve as advertising director of the Columbia Missourian newspaper and as a faculty member in the advertising department. She taught for 30 years, retiring in 1985.

As advertising director, she was responsible for display advertising sales that supported the Missourian in its mission as a community newspaper to train students. She developed an advertising sales manual and legal guide for students, similar to desk books used by reporters and copyeditors. Ruth set many advertising sales records, increasing the quality and quantity of advertising in the newspaper.

Ruth taught newspaper advertising and salesmanship for the first 19 years of her tenure. She then taught the introductory course in the advertising sequence, "Advertising Principles and Practice." She organized the weekly labs of 300 undergraduate students and doled out their creative assignments as well as supervised the teaching assistants who graded the lab assignments. She also taught courses on advertising management and retail and direct advertising to majors.

Before her career in journalism education, she worked as display advertising representative at the St. Joseph (Missouri) News Press & Gazette; advertising and business manager at the West Plains (Missouri) Daily and Semi-Weekly Quill; assistant advertising manager at the Macon (Missouri) Chronicle-Herald; and vice president of the Chronicle-Herald Publishing Company.

Ruth's family includes four generations who attended the School of Journalism: editor and publisher of the Chronicle-Herald father Frank P. Briggs (1894-1992) in 1915; brothers Tom in 1939 and Gene in 1943; nephew Jack Briggs in 1961 and his son Jeff in 1985; and daughter Cathy in 1971 and 1974; and her husband Jack Dvorak in 1975.

She enjoyed music, travel (both international and all 50 U.S. states), garden and yard work. She loved her family and was especially proud of her daughter, grandson and great- grandson.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the Frank P. Briggs Memorial Scholarship, University of Missouri, Office of Gift Processing, 704 Conley Ave, 407 Reynolds Alumni Center, Columbia, MO 65211.

An inurnment ceremony will take place at a later date in Walnut Ridge Cemetery, Fayette, Missouri.

Tribute Wall

KW

“ I was saddened greatly to hear this news. I am so fortunate that I had the opportunity to take care of her, and get to know her wonderful family.

Much love,
Kim White (Meadowood)

Kim White - May 04, 2016 at 04:58 AM

BB

“ So sorry to learn of Ruth's passing. She was a dear friend and colleague at the Missouri School of Journalism. She will be missed by all who knew her.

Brian Brooks

Brian Brooks - May 03, 2016 at 10:35 AM

MR

“ My favorite aunt. She provided comfort when I lost my mom. Peace be with her, Cathy and the rest of the family.

mike ramon - May 03, 2016 at 09:45 AM