



# Julia (Judy) Ross Stoops

April 30, 1935 - May 25, 2024

## A Summary of the Life and Passing of Julia Ross Stoops

Just think of stepping on shore, and finding it Heaven  
Of touching a hand and finding it God's  
Of breathing new air and finding it celestial  
Of waking up in Glory, and finding it "Home"  
("Finally Home"-Don Wyrzten)

After a 15 year battle with Alzheimer's, our beloved Mother, Julia "Judy" Ross Stoops, 89 years old, passed peacefully into the arms of Jesus on May 25, 2024 – but, until she heard from all five of her children, she refused to draw her last breath!

Born April 30, 1935, Judy grew up in Bloomington, Indiana, the only daughter of Dr. Ben R. and Julia H. Ross, spoiled by her big brothers, Jimmy and Hank. She graduated from The University High School in 1953 and attended Hanover College in Hanover, Indiana where she met and married her husband of 29 years, James A. Stoops. They eventually made their home in Crown Point, Indiana where they raised their five children.

Mom loved the Lord, and all His Creation, especially people, animals and plants. She was kind and welcoming to everyone she met, and those who were hurting, or in trouble, were guaranteed a sympathetic listening ear and any help she could give them. She was gifted with a quiet strength and determination that served her well all her life. She dearly loved her family: the five children she delivered -in a record 6 years; her parents and brothers, in-laws, nieces and nephews, sons and daughters in law, and all her grandchildren. Once she made a friend, they were friends forever, and she made many friends wherever she lived. She also welcomed all her children's friends into our home which was like Grand Central Station with all the coming and going, and she became a mentor to many of them.

If there is a Rainbow Bridge on the way to Heaven, Mom was greeted there by a huge crowd of adoring animals waiting for her return. She loved all creatures great and small, from the largest mammal to the fascinating spider, and instilled a deep respect for all living things in her own children and others. There was never a time when our house and yard weren't filled with animals of all kinds: pets and rescues. There were dogs and cats, of course, but it wasn't surprising to find a horse in the garage, a possum in the basement, a raccoon sharing our bed, all manners of reptiles, amphibians, and insects in the family room. Later, when we moved to a small hobby farm, were added rabbits, chickens, ducks, goats, more horses, donkeys, steers, llamas, a pig or two, guinea hens and more. There we raised and milked dairy goats and chickens and sold goat milk and eggs locally. And there Mom discovered the perfect recipe to combine her love of animals and children-a petting zoo! Local schools and other youth organizations were soon making regular field trips to Mom's zoo. But then she worried about reaching the kids in the cities, who most missed the opportunity to interact with animals and couldn't make the trip to her country zoo. So, she packed up her large van and took her petting zoo on the road – into the city schools!

Our Mom passed on many valuable life skills to her own children, and others - always leading by example and providing encouragement- never discouraging us from pursuing our own path. She was creatively gifted- an accomplished artist in multiple mediums, including painting, drawing, sculpting, stained glass and more, and, as soon as we could hold a crayon without chewing on it, she made sure to provide us with all the tools needed to explore our own abilities. All five of her children, and then her grandchildren, followed in her footsteps developing their own artistic pursuits.

Another of Mom's favorite pastimes was creating beauty in her surroundings. She had the greenest thumbs around and created the most colorful gardens, so, as with art, we all grew up and assumed we also had to create elaborate gardens and landscaping projects wherever we settled. When Mom had the opportunity, she took the Master Gardener course at the local extension office and shared her love and knowledge of gardening with many others.

In all her artistic endeavors, Mom exhibited the joy of a child. She was a good seamstress and enjoyed creating elaborate costumes for herself, kids and friends for any occasion. She would even devise masks and other costume parts out of cardboard, chicken wire, papier mâché and paint, or whatever she had on hand. Despite her gentle demeanor, Mom had a devilish sense of humor and delighted in playing practical jokes on others, often involving the sudden appearance of a large rubber snake, or even a large LIVE snake draped over her shoulders. Severed legs peeking out from under a sofa were another favorite.

As kind and gentle as she was, if Mom was adamant about something she wouldn't take "no" for an answer. As soon as we were old enough to walk, we had to learn how to dog paddle and hold our breath under water. This was imperative as our Grandpa had a large pool, and his idea of a swimming lesson was tossing little ones into the deep end and seeing if they bobbed up again. This was also important when we moved to a home on a small lake and Mom signed us all up for the swimming team, and herself as a swim coach. Early Saturday mornings, when most kids were watching cartoons, we were swimming laps in the cold lake where the ice had probably just melted the month before. The benefit was that we could swim and boat in the lake and Grandpa's pool as much as we liked without adult supervision. And, again leading by example, our mother joined the local Red Cross lifesaving team and participated in several heart-rending lifesaving attempts on our lake -for children who should have been supervised. A sobering life lesson for her witnessing children.

Mom read regularly to us: fairytales, wonderful books of adventure and fantasy, even poetry, and we all grew up to be avid readers. Our family, with Mom as tour-guide, made regular sojourns into Chicago, an hour away, to visit the awe-inspiring Museums of Natural History, Science and Industry, the Art Institute, and, of course, the Lincoln Park and Brookfield Zoos and Shedd Aquarium- and our small world expanded. All this with 5 children in tow! Mom was a homeschool teacher before there was a homeschool movement! She often organized hikes through the woods and trips to various state parks where she taught us to appreciate nature in all its wonder and beauty, and we all became lovers of nature and hiking. To this day, one of our favorite pastimes on the few occasions all of us siblings can get together is to- take a hike!

It is hard to measure the extent of Mom's legacy and influence on our lives. She was not one for hugs and endearments, but she constantly gave of herself to her children and others. When sons were ready for boy scouts, she became a den mother. When daughters were ready for girl scouts, she became a Brownie leader, and then she became a 4-H Club leader. She found her calling when she started a 4-H Dairy Goat Club, for which she continued to mentor kids of all ages long after her own children had grown.

Mom had a lifelong fascination with log cabins, and finally bought her own little cabin in 1990, when she was 55 years old. It was located near the artistic community of Nashville, Indiana, not far from Bloomington where she grew up, and where her youngest son Mark and family were now located in her childhood home. Here, with the help of her grown children and friends, she moved the remainder of her menagerie and went straight to work fixing up the cabin, creating colorful gardens and adopting stray animals. Mom loved

having friends and family, and especially grandchildren, visit her and her critters on her rustic property, and they loved coming. Her artist's heart was delighted to be enveloped in Nashville and its creative community, where she made many more friends. Though she seldom worked outside the home when her children were growing up, she did enjoy part time jobs in Nashville gift shops and nearby Brown County State Park while she lived there.

In her 60's Mom was diagnosed with, and survived, breast cancer. In 2009, at 74 years of age, she developed Alzheimer's/dementia and could no longer live alone in her little cabin. Five grown children and their families gathered from across the country for the sad and difficult task of cleaning out the Nashville cabin and property for sale. Mom was welcomed into her daughter Kathy's family in Pennsylvania. There she was able to spend the next 6 years putting in the gardens, playing with the family's dogs and cats, watching tv with her grandchildren, and going to church and on outings with her family.

At 80 years of age, Mom was still physically mobile, but not able to understand when her actions, such as cleaning the top of a hot oven or wandering out a door, put her at risk. In 2015, for her safety, we made the difficult decision to move her into a skilled nursing home in Bloomington, IN. In the beginning, Mom adapted well. She loved to help clean tables and serve food and was a gentle comforter of any resident who was fearful or in pain. All the staff loved her. She no longer seemed able to remember her children's names but was always delighted to see us when we visited. Little by little however, the terrible disease stole more and more of Mom's light away. She stopped speaking, then walking, then her eyes closed-only rarely to open again, with just the briefest glimpse of her bright light peeking out. She had difficulty swallowing, and eating became a struggle. She caught covid-during that long dark period that we were unable to visit her-and survived. She suffered from more health problems. In March of 2023, after the pandemic restrictions had ended, Kathy had her moved down to a skilled nursing home in Elkin, NC near where she and her husband had relocated. There she could keep a closer watch over Mom's care. At the Elkin facility were multiple colorful gardens they could stroll through with a wheelchair, and sniff the flowers, and, sometimes, take a quick peek at them. On April 30, 2024, Mom celebrated her 89th birthday, then 12 days later her last Mother's Day in the garden, at which time an infection took hold of her tired body. Children and grandchildren visited and called as Mom quickly succumbed to the disease.

With one of her children at her bedside and one on the phone, Mom took her last breath the morning of May 25, 2024, and went home to Heaven, leaving us with the miraculous gift of knowing, that even 15 years of Alzheimer's could not steal her memory of her love

for her children-or her stubborn determination!

Judy is survived by her five children: Katherine A. Queitzsch (Chuck), North Carolina; James D. Stoops (Deyanira), Kansas; Robert B. Stoops (Sue), Minnesota; Mark A. Stoops (Kara), Indiana; Tamara Joy (Paul), Florida. She was blessed with seven precious grandchildren: Leslie Genetti (Gregg); Rebecca Stoops (Evan); Mark J. Stoops (Grace); Caitlin (CJ) White (Jeremy); Bryan Queitzsch; Chloe and Willow Reagan-Stoops; and one great grandson: Nicholas Genetti; as well as many dear nieces and nephews, and their children and grandchildren. Also, treasured friends, Kathie Wilson, since their school days; and Gillian Field, a fellow enthusiast of all growing things; and those extra special, loving caregivers who went above and beyond in Judy's care during her years of Alzheimer's.

She was preceded in death by her former husband, her beloved parents; three brothers: Henry, Donald and Dr. James Ross; two sisters-in-law: Joy Ross and Carol Ross; and a niece, Sherry Ross; and is the last of her immediate family.

A private memorial service will be held at the convenience of the family.

Contributions in Judy's memory may be made to the following:

Alzheimer's Association, alz.org, 225 N. Michigan Ave, Flr 17, Chicago, IL 60601  
(or) American Cancer Society, cancer.org, PO Box 6704, Hagerstown, MD 21741  
(or) the animal or children's charity of your choice

# Tribute Wall

CK

“ First, I want you to know how I love your mother. I was her supervisor for several years when she worked at the Abe Martin Lodge. She became more than an employee to me, she became a dear friend. She was a good worker, but more, a good friend. I am saddened to hear she was so ill. I lost track of her after I quit the lodge, and I did try to locate her but to no avail. I met you girls once, but I am sure you don't remember. Your mother and I shared a lot of laughs and a lot of "talks" and she loved you all more than life.

Her knowledge of all things "nature" amazed me. She was so intelligent and meticulous. Her stories about the goats and snakes and her cats and her donkey and selling milk were mesmerizing and it seemed that some days we talked more than we worked.

She was a beautiful woman! She and my older brother were the same age so I related to her in many ways. Judy was very instrumental in getting Andy Rogers to stop the employees from smoking at the lodge. It finally became a state mandate that no smoking was allowed. That was really helpful to most of us. Mr. Rogers thought very highly of your mother.

She was such a friendly soul and would go out of her way to help anyone.

The obituary was beautiful and I thoroughly enjoyed the pictures. They made me feel like I grew up with her. She was sort of a sister/mother to me and I respected her a great deal. She had an incredible soul and I will never forget her. Hearing of her death affected me profoundly. I truly love her and I thank all of you for sharing her with the world, because it made it a better place for those of us who knew her. My, oh my, she was gorgeous!

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**Carolyn Kritzer** - November 19, 2024 at 09:56 AM

KQ

“ Katherine Queitzsch lit a candle in memory of Julia Stoops



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**Katherine Queitzsch** - October 21, 2024 at 04:41 PM

KQ

“ To my brothers and sister in compiling: "A Summary of the Life and Passing of Julia Ross Stoops". I don't know about all of you, but I thought it was very healing to bring back all those stories of our "real mom", before dementia/Alzheimer's moved in and took over her mind and body. Because she was one strong, amazing lady, and it is so important to remember that! And, our stubborn Mom, even in her last days of battle with dementia and the infection taking over her body, had a very important message for her children. She was determined to hear from all FIVE of us before she left us. Deep inside, she never did forget us! And with her last breath I believe her final message to us was to stick together and take care of each other-no matter how far apart we live. ❤️ Kathy

Katherine Queitzsch - October 21, 2024 at 04:40 PM

KQ

“ 40 files added to the album Julia Stoops



Katherine Queitzsch - October 20, 2024 at 04:34 PM

LJ

“ I remember the evening Judy came over to our house with Chuck and Kathy to enjoy s'mores cooked outside around a fire on a beautiful fall day. What a great evening that was!

Lori Jacques - October 19, 2024 at 05:41 PM

KQ

Thank you for that precious memory, Lori! ❤️

Katherine Queitzsch - October 21, 2024 at 04:43 PM

JP

“ 17 files added to the album *Julia Stoops*



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**Jon Pace** - October 15, 2024 at 01:26 PM