



Marion Bankert Michael

April 29, 1929 - October 23, 2025

Marion Bankert Michael, Associate Professor Emerita of Theatre, Drama, and Contemporary Dance at Indiana University Bloomington, passed away peacefully in Bloomington on October 23, 2025. She was preceded in death by her husband, Dr. R. Keith Michael (October 19, 2025) and will be deeply missed by the many students, colleagues, and friends whose lives she enriched through her artistry, intellect, and grace.

Marion was preceded in death by her father, Clarence O. Bankert, her mother, Lillian Mary Lemmon Bankert, a brother Larry Nelson Bankert and stepsister Jean W. Nafzinger. She is survived by her nieces, Karen Nafzinger Moore (Tom), Nancy Jo Carter (James) and a nephew, James R. Michael (Cathy J) Born in Littlestown, Pennsylvania in 1929, Marion earned her bachelor's degree in 1951 from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, where she majored in Speech, Speech Pathology, Theatre, and English. She received her M.F.A. in Theatre from the University of Iowa in 1958, with an emphasis in Acting, and completed postgraduate work at the University of Bristol in England. Her expertise in voice, speech, and dialects for the stage became the foundation of her career as both performer and teacher.

Before joining the Indiana University faculty, Marion enjoyed an accomplished career as a professional actress. She appeared in over 150 roles on stage including the Erie Playhouse in Pennsylvania and Theatre L'Homme Dieu in Minnesota.

Marion began her teaching career at St. Cloud State University in Minnesota,

joining the faculty in 1962 and earning tenure there before accepting a position at Indiana University Bloomington in 1975. Over more than two decades on the IU faculty, she developed and led the university's curriculum in voice, speech, and dialects, coaching more than 300 university and professional productions for the University Theatre, Brown County Playhouse, Edyvean Repertory Theatre, and the Indiana Repertory Theatre.

Nationally, Marion was a respected leader in the field of theatre education. She was recognized for her breakthrough work in developing new approaches to teaching voice and speech. She was among the pioneering group of women who helped establish the Women's Program in the American Theatre Association. She also served as head of the National Drama Competition for the National Society of Arts and Letters in 1989 and 1994, and later as National Liaison for Award Winners from 1998 to 2000. At Indiana University, she was Vice President of the Theatre Circle and a member of the Board of Directors for the National Society of Arts and Letters.

Her accomplishments were recognized with numerous honors, including a citation from the Indiana Theatre Association for "Outstanding Achievement in Indiana College and University Theatre," a commendation from the Indiana General Assembly for "years of outstanding service to Indiana University," and recognition as a "Distinguished Woman" by the American Theatre Association. Marion and Keith shared a love story that spanned more than seventy years—a partnership rooted in creativity, curiosity, and enduring love. Their life together was rich with travel, books, laughter, and the companionship of their beloved long-haired dachshunds. They were a fixture at the Westminster Dog Show with friends and often found inspiration on Broadway stages in New York City.

Marion will be remembered for her brilliance as a teacher, her elegance as a performer, and her unwavering belief in the transformative power of theatre. Her light continues to shine through the countless students, colleagues, and friends whose lives she so deeply touched.

Memorial contributions may be made to the R. Keith Michael and Marion

Bankert Michael Scholarship: <https://give.myiu.org/iu-bloomington/P370013006.html>

Celebration of Life Open House for Keith and Marion to be held at Meadowood Retirement Community on December 20, 2025, from 5:00pm to 7:00pm.

Arrangements are being handled by Allen Funeral Home, Bloomington, IN

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

DEC **20**. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Meadowood
2455 E. Tamarack Trail
Bloomington, IN 47408

Tribute Wall

SA

“ I was so luck to have Dr. Marion (she taught us to pronounce Ma-
rion like apple not merry go round) Michael as my voice and diction
teacher at IU in the late 1980s. She drilled and drilled us (remember
the final consonant d on and) on Standard American English which I
have taught to students for nearly 40 years. I was so lucky to have
them both as instructors-love and gratitude to their memories and to
their families. SaraLyn Archibald IU c/o 1990.

SaraLyn Archibald - January 08 at 05:23 PM

AB

“ 1 file added to the album Marion



Ash Babler-Browning - October 28, 2025 at 10:04 AM

AB

“ 1 file added to the album Marion



Ash Babler-Browning - October 28, 2025 at 10:03 AM