



Joy Sue Finley

June 11, 1946 - March 27, 2020

Joy Finley, 73, of Branch, died peacefully, Friday, March 27, with her husband Chet by her side following a courageous battle with metastatic breast cancer. Joy was born June 11, 1946, in Jackson to the parents of Keith and Ruby Finley.

She graduated from Jackson High School and from there attended Ferris State University for a brief time and then attended Western Michigan University where she got her bachelor's degree and her teaching certificate. After Western Joy went to Eastern Michigan University where she got her master's degree in reading.

Joy started her career in teaching as a reading teacher in Alexandria, Virginia. She moved back to Michigan and was hired as a fourth grade teacher in Okemos. While at Okemos, she published several educational books. Joy, in her own creative and artistic way, put cute finger print characters in the form of different animals at the bottom of the worksheets that the children loved, which created an incentive to do the worksheets. In each school district she distinguished herself as an outstanding reading teacher with her creative ways.

After some time in Okemos she was encouraged to get her administrative certificate and became a principal in the Maple Valley School system in

Vermontville. Later, she went on to become principal of Woodworth School in Leslie and from there took over as principal at Washington Elementary School in Holland. She retired from the Holland Public Schools system in 1998.

During her time as an administrator, she was able to bring a unique reading program she learned at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, while at Okemos, which allowed children to learn to read that couldn't learn under any other reading program. Because of Joy's gift of understanding the learning process and what was needed, she was able to create an environment in many other areas to facilitate better learning overall, in the schools she worked in during her career.

Upon retiring, she and her husband became snowbirds, buying a home in Venice, Florida, in a retirement community.

Joy loved her lake home in Michigan and could always be found organizing picnics in the summer in the front yard by the lake or putting together a progressive dinner in the fall or holding a tea party for her girlfriends using one of her antique Hall tea pots from her collection. Joy loved canning and picking fruit from northern Michigan. She also was an excellent pie maker and the family always looked forward to her pies.

While in Florida, she was no less active organizing and preparing for the yearly commodore's ball or getting friends to participate in a show she came up with for presentation to the community residents on the big stage in the clubhouse. One of her favorite things in Florida was to go out in the boat in the tropical green waters of south Florida and explore islands and restaurants accessible by water.

Wherever Joy was she made get-togethers like a festival.

Travel was also very important to Joy, and her husband always used to say that if God had intended her to travel that much, He would have put wheels on her butt.

Joy belonged to the Beta Sigma Phi sorority for some 50 years and was a member of the local chapter in Ludington.

Joy's ashes will be buried in the Bachelor Cemetery after a to be announced memorial, hopefully this summer. A memorial picnic will be held at her favorite place, her home, northwest of Branch in the front yard by the lake and in the tradition that Joy herself would have done.

Joy is survived by her husband Chet Schutt; Lara Norris her daughter and son-in-law Bob Norris; Larisa Takats, her granddaughter; Neil Finley her brother and her sister-in-law Pat Finley; Craig Finley her nephew and Ann Finley, Craig's wife; Tod Finley her nephew and his wife Rockne; Brad Finley her nephew and his wife Jan; Linda Finley her niece and her husband Dan Ramos; Annette Hack her cousin and her husband Mike; along with other cousins and her former husband Tom Patten.

Rest in peace Our Creative Girl.

Tribute Wall

LB

“ Rest in peace my "finder sister"....we spent lots of time together searching for my cottage, gosh over 27years ago...we called ourselves the finder sisters driving through all the mud and down the dirt roads.....All the memories from Washington Elementary School, trips to Chicago, visits to your cottage "before" the addition, to the time spent in Florida along with our summer visits to Michigan....I always admired your zest for life, creativity and most of all your friendship during our time in Michigan and throughout the years after we moved to Florida...My heart is broken....Rest in peace Joy...no one can take away my memories....Love your finder sister friend, Laurie Boeve

Laurie Boeve - April 01, 2020 at 04:24 PM