



Judith R. Betts

October 3, 1945 - July 12, 2024

Judith Rose Betts, age 78, passed away peacefully on July 12, 2024 at her home. She was born on October 3, 1945 in Scottsbluff, NE to Alvin Sprecher and Rose Lesch Sprecher. Judy was a precocious and willful child, who at age three declared that she would "no longer be taking naps." At age five she insisted her father drive her to the local library to start taking books out. She secretly practiced writing her name beforehand because she knew that was required to obtain a library card.

Despite her family's living comfortably but thriftily on her father's salary as a pastor, Judy's mother exposed her to culture, music and the benefits of buying well-made clothing that lasts. Judy was a quick study-learning to play piano and to prefer expensive designer brand clothing early on.

At age 18 she literally shouted to the heavens that she wanted to experience EVERYTHING life had to offer, which she embraced throughout her life, though sometimes painfully.

Judy graduated from Benton Harbor High School in 1963, where she participated in dance, drama and the Madrigal choir. After graduation she joined the Teen Challenge anti-drug movement.

She was married briefly to and had a son, Nicholas, with the charming,

charismatic Teen Challenge counselor, who later proved to also be abusive and incapable of stopping his own drug use. Following a tumultuous divorce, Judy and Nicholas moved to the Detroit area to start fresh.

After a period of taking one unsatisfying job after another, she eventually opened a daycare center with two friends. This small step sparked a desire to work professionally in human services. Hence, she began college at Wayne State University in the late 1960's, which became a two decade journey.

Upon completing her Bachelor's degree, Judy became a counselor for Michigan Rehabilitation Services where she ran a program that was wildly successful at training and placing intercity youth with disabilities into jobs. She also met and married her husband, Jack, also a rehabilitation counselor at MRS. The couple were married on December 9, 1972, nearly 52 years! They made their home in the University District and in 2009, Judy was recognized with the Spirit of Detroit Award for being one of the creators of Walker-Stennis Orchard and Park. Her personal home garden was selected to be showcased in the University District home and garden tour in 2002, which was a source of enduring pride.

While still employed at Michigan Rehabilitation Services, she began graduate studies to earn a Master's degree, and eventually a doctorate in psychology. However, due to ongoing struggles with MS, she could not complete her dissertation in the allotted time period after completing her doctoral coursework. Nevertheless, Judy had received her limited psychology license upon finishing her Master's degree, which allowed her to practice.

She left her rehabilitation counselor position to work as a psychologist at Henry Ford Hospital and then managed a new teen pregnancy prevention program in the hospital's Obstetrics Department. This program was so successful at reducing the incidence of high-risk births and infant mortality that

it received a very significant grant to expand the program from Easter Seals National. Despite her love for that program, Judy decided to work as a private practice psychologist so she could work fewer hours and better manage her MS symptoms.

Unfortunately, her MS symptoms, along with her coexisting conditions of arthritis, diabetes, peripheral neuropathy and Parkinson's Disease, continued to worsen over the years, and she eventually retired to engage in less demanding pursuits. Judy enjoyed writing, reading, painting, stained glass art, home design and gardening. Judy also loved watching sports with her family—especially Michigan and Detroit Lions football.

Judy was a bright, loving, giving, inquisitive and intense human being who took everything life threw at her, but who did not go gently into that good night. Instead, she raged against the dimming of the light.

Beloved wife of Jack Betts. Loving mother of Nicholas. Dear sister of Timothy (Dee) Sprecher and Jonathan (Wennie) Sprecher.

Services will be held on Monday, July 22, 2024. In-State 10 am until time of funeral Mass 11 am at Gesu Catholic Church, 17180 Oak Dr., Detroit. Share your memories at www.SullivanFuneralDirectors.com.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations to Michigan Humane would be appreciated ~ www.MichiganHumane.org.

Previous Events

Visitation

JUL 22. 10:00 AM (ET)

Gesu Catholic Church
17180 Oak Drive
Detroit, MI 48221

Funeral Mass

JUL 22. 11:00 AM (ET)

Gesu Catholic Church
17180 Oak Drive
Detroit, MI 48221

Tribute Wall

TS

“ My sister, our brother Jon and I were so blessed to grow up in a family that gave so much to the world around them. Our father was a wonderful pastor and great man of God. Our mother was the anchor of the home and greatly supported all of us as we grew and set out to find our own way in life. Each of us took a different path, but we always knew our parents were there to encourage and pray for us.

Judy had the quote "privilege" to be the middle child between two boys, and she had a profound impact on us. Being the middle child she made sure she was also the center of attention. I always remember a weekly trip to the library in East Detroit. She would check out more books than she could easily carry and devour them before the next weekly trip.

We had the privilege of growing up with no TV and many people constantly in and out of our home and lives. We didn't miss the TV. Our lives were full of family, friends, and church 4 times a week.

Judy loved her heritage of pioneering grand and great grandparents, and it seemed that same pioneer attitude of wanting to know "what's over the next hill" helped her overcome many obstacles in her quest for a full and exciting life.

I always admired, and often was the recipient of her talent to be able to express herself in many ways --some very verbal, and to stand her ground regardless of circumstances. I learned early on not to debate with Judy --you won't win. She had many talents, including the ability to paint and write exquisite poetry. I'll never forget the beautiful poem she wrote in tribute to our Grandpa, August Sprecher.

After high school we all went different directions, and our contact became less frequent. But Judy made a point to always stay in touch, and every call or note ended with "I love you". I'm proud to say Judith Rose Betts is my sister. Her memory will always be a

treasure -God bless you Jack and Nick, and may the joy of having my sister being your wife or mother bring you lasting peace and comfort.

Auf Wiedersehen, Judy! "See you later"

Tim Sprecher - July 23, 2024 at 06:10 PM

RF

“ *Ronald & Verlie Ruffin & Family purchased the Days of Sunshine Bouquet for the family of Judith R. Betts.*



Ronald & Verlie Ruffin & Family - July 19, 2024 at 02:51 PM

JT

“ *Judy joined our Family and immediately took us all in with her upbeat personality, beautiful smile and engaging conversation skills. Aunt Judy could make art out of anything, she would find a broken down item and turn it into an art piece worthy of her garden. Thank you so much Uncle Jack for bring her and Nick into our lives. I wish I had magic words to take away your pain. One day you and Nick will be overwhelmed with happy memories. Until then remember you have friends and family that love you.*



James Tucker - July 19, 2024 at 02:25 PM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Judith R. Betts.



July 18, 2024 at 02:19 PM



“ Tim, Dee and Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Judith R. Betts.

Tim, Dee and Family - July 18, 2024 at 02:19 PM



“ Judy was a tremendously kind and wise woman. In spite of all her physical problems, she was concerned and comforting when her friends were experiencing problems. Great sense of humor and, I must say, this lady DID NOT suffer fools gladly. To say she will be missed is the understatement of the year. God bless you, Judy.
Mary Schmitt

Mary Ellen Schmitt - July 17, 2024 at 10:39 AM

VR

Judy was my dear friend and former neighbor. I lived across the street from her and Jack on Muirland Street in the University of Detroit District. I met Judy over 30 years ago. When I first saw Judy, she was driving up our street in her Saab convertible with the top down and her red hair blowing in the wind. She seemed to be happy and enjoying life. I thought to myself, "I would like to meet that lady one day". I didn't have to wait long. I was outside in the yard and Judy came over to say hello and introduce herself. We became fast friends sharing a love for gardening, decorating and fashion. She was as so knowledgeable about many things. She was so nice and a ray of sunshine in my life. We kept in touch after my husband (Ronald) and I moved to Franklin, TN to be near our children and grandchildren. I am comforted knowing that Judy has no more MS, Neuropathy or Parkinson's. She is healthy and whole dancing in Glory in the presence of the Lord. Our love and condolences to Jack, Nick and the entire family.

Verlie Ruffin

Verlie M. Ruffin - July 19, 2024 at 03:29 PM

SB

Judy was a beautiful, loving, and wonderful person. She was a ray of sunshine in an often dimly lit world. Rest in peace Judy.

Sandra Battle - July 19, 2024 at 05:43 PM

NC

Ms. Judy you were 1 of my favorite clients and that's saying a lot cause I don't have many, you were so easy to get along with that you became my favorite the 1st couple of days that I came into your life. Ms. Judy you were and still are the strongest women that I've ever met, and it was a privilege and a honor to take care of you and to meet you! I will definitely miss you. Thank you for allowing me to be in your life! Love always Your Nova and family! RIP MS. JUDY

Nova conover - July 21, 2024 at 11:23 PM

AK

Miss Judi was my 5th grade teacher. I didn't see her again till the Jambalaya Festival of 1980 and bought the 1st of many Betts paintings. I always looked forward to her Christmas cards. She'll be missed.

Arlene Kunkel - March 17, 2025 at 12:28 PM