



CELEBRATION *of Life*

Mary Irene Stephens, Ph.D.

April 18, 1931—May 8, 2023

Saturday, July 29, 2023 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.

a Celebration of Life will be held in the Fellowship Hall at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Tippecanoe County at 333 Meridian St., West Lafayette, IN. The public is welcome to attend.

We gather to celebrate the cheerful, buoyant spirit of Irene. The youngest of five children of Jack and Edith Cattran of Akron, Ohio, Irene attended DePauw University and was a member of the Delta Delta Delta sorority. Her flair for drama bloomed at DePauw where, among other roles, she was the lead in Euripides' *Medea*. An active alum, she helped organize class reunions.

Irene married Mark W. Stephens in 1953. While she and Mark lived in Columbus, Ohio, Irene was a schoolteacher and earned a Master's degree in speech pathology.

They moved to West Lafayette in 1956. Irene was active in the League of Women Voters. In 1971 she earned her Ph.D. from Purdue University as a specialist in childhood language acquisition and disorders. Irene was an award-winning teacher. She trained speech therapists and conducted research at Purdue University (1972-1977) and Northern Illinois University (1977-1999). Irene kept her home at 118 Rockland Drive during her time at N.I.U. She cherished her "TGIF" circle of women friends in W.L.

Irene developed a mechanism for speech clinicians to use simple sentences to assess the language difficulties of four- to six-year-old children called the Stephens Oral Language Screening Test (SOLST). At Head Start in Gary, Indiana, she worked with black children learning language and supported Black English as an acceptable variant. She also contributed to communicative enhancement for students with autism.

Irene often used her "Bill and John stories" as a teaching tool to illustrate how her sons' imperfect grasp of syntax or context paralleled different paths of language learning. Another way she engaged children in language tests involved helping them make and animate their own sock puppets. Weekly commuting from W.L. to northern Illinois led Irene to use a CB radio. Her handle was *Butterfly*.

Irene was happily married to Benton H. Faulkner, whom she had known since they were at DePauw, from 1994 until his death in 2000. Ben and Irene loved to dance and were quite the travelers, enjoying cruises to Alaska and the Baltic. She was married to Donald Martin from 2004 until his death in 2008. Don and Irene tied the knot at 118 Rockland Drive, a house which Don, a contractor, had remodeled for her many years before. Thus, with her maiden name and three husbands, she was Mary Irene Cattran Stephens Faulkner Martin.

Irene enjoyed stylish attire, walks in Happy Hollow Park, and listening to the birdsong from the ravine behind her house. She moved to Westminster Village in 2016 where she became an avid fan of Chicago Cubs baseball broadcasts. Tisha Scott was her friend, helper, and patient caregiver in a multitude of ways prior to Westminster and throughout Irene's later years.

Her cheerful, buoyant spirit issued from a seemingly bottomless well. Irene was a trusted mentor to her students and a staunch cheerleader for her many dear friends. Her generosity was legendary.

Celebration of Life

Mary Irene Stephens

Saturday, July 29, 2023 at 4:00 p.m.



Celebrating the full, fun, and loving life
of Mary Irene Stephens

April 18, 1931 to May 8, 2023

We welcome your
memories, humor
and stories!

4:00 p.m. **Gather**

Photo History of Irene
Fun Memory Items



4:30 p.m. **Welcome**

Bill Stephens—Son

Sharing Memories

Bill Stephens—Son
John Stephens—Son
Natisha Scott—Friend
Open Invitation to Share



5:00 p.m. **Reception**

6:00 p.m. **Farewell**



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