



Kathleen O'Dell

October 12, 1940 - September 30, 2022

IN MEMORY OF:
KATHLEEN O'DELL

Serving Location:
CRAIN PLEASANT GROVE-MURDALE FUNERAL HOME
31 Memorial Drive (Old Route 13), Murphysboro, Illinois

Kathleen O'Dell, 81, of Shiloh, Illinois, passed peacefully from this life to life with her Savior September 30, 2022 with her family at her side.

Kathy, known to many as KO, barely 5 feet tall, was a dynamo in a skirt and pumps. She handled assignments and challenges with unbridled energy and aplomb.

Kathy began her career as a journalist, working for several smaller papers and then landing at the St. Louis Globe-Democrat and the Rocky Mountain News. In her later career, she led in marketing, public relations, and fundraising positions at Belleville Area College, now Southwestern Illinois College, most recently as Executive Director of the SWIC Foundation. She was proud of the extensive scholarship program she developed at the college and of the construction of the Schmidt Art Center, a project she willed to be done and it was. She had a place in her heart for those less fortunate, leading to her

involvement with the Christian Activity Center, mission projects at her church, and the development of a non-profit organization that supported women and children. She loved kids and kids loved her.

Kathy's family will remember her as loving, kind, funny, and generous. She was a rock for others in tumultuous times; supportive and encouraging at every turn. Her nieces and nephews loved that she was the adult who always wanted to sit at the kids' table at holiday dinners.

KO's colleagues at the college will remember her as a visionary who was always at her desk by 6AM. If she was going to be on a committee, she wanted to chair it. She was skilled at researching topics (way before Google) and with research in hand, she could prove to be a worthy adversary or a tremendous support to anyone's position.

Her friends know that she always wanted to be the first to try a new restaurant or experience. If you did it first without her, she wasn't as interested in going.

Her friends at Christ Church, where she was an active member will recall her as a willing volunteer, generous, and respectful of others. She enjoyed leading the charge to install stained glass windows in the sanctuary.

Everyone who knew her would agree that she was always early for appointments, independent, honest, strong willed, loyal, a hard worker, and wasn't afraid to call it like she saw it. KO was not known to sugarcoat the message. She was funny and had a quick sense of humor; she got a twinkle in her eye that foretold she was about to say something she thought was funny. Whether it be serving on a committee at church, a project at work, voice lessons, building her art collection, or running for the state senate in 1972, when she was "in," she was all in.

She was born in Donnellson, Illinois to parents, Lewis J.T. and Ruby nee Wilson O'Dell. Her parents, brother, Lewis and his wife Helen, as well as her brother-in-law Frank preceded her in death.

She is survived by her sister Marilyn, her brother Kent and sister-in-law Rena, and many nieces and nephews and their families.

Should you wish, memorials may be made to Christian Activity Center, Christ Church, the Kathy O'Dell Scholarship fund at SWIC or a charity of your choice.

A private service will be held at a later date.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Crain Pleasant Grove-Murdale Funeral Home.

To view the obituary and/or to leave an online condolence for the family, please visit www.crainsonline.com.

Tribute Wall



“ *Kathleen O'Dell*

October 23, 2023 at 06:26 AM



“ *Be My Love Bouquet with Red Roses was purchased for the family of Kathleen O'Dell.*



October 19, 2022 at 12:25 PM



“ *SWIC Foundation Board and Staff purchased the Lord's Prayer 44" Sonnet for the family of Kathleen O'Dell.*



SWIC Foundation Board and Staff - October 11, 2022 at 10:52 AM



“ *God's speed my friend. A force of nature. A life more impactful than most. Thanks for your work with the SWIC foundation. Your legacy lives on.*

Bill Grogan - October 11, 2022 at 10:30 AM

RD

“ *Symathy to all of Kathys family. I knew her from the College and as a Globe reporter. She was a very fine lady with a wonderful spirit about her. Bob Dintelmann*

Robert H Dintelmann - October 09, 2022 at 10:50 PM

SM

“ *Kathy always called me her “young” friend and she was my “old” friend. She was so kind, caring, and thoughtful! My fondest memories are the laughter we shared! Kathy, I have missed you! I can only imagine what you are taking charge of in Heaven!*

Susan Markle - October 09, 2022 at 10:32 PM

JT

“ *KO was one of my best buddies at SIU-Carbondale. Funniest and most loyal friend ever. She served as our maid of honor in Belleville in 1964. Nice long life and so well-spent. Janice Grieve Towers, Springfield, MO*

Janice Towers - October 09, 2022 at 09:20 PM

GW

So many sweet memories of this beautiful lady. She was awesome great teacher and friend to me in my early walk with Christ. The Lord Bless you and keep you in the palm of his hands 🙏

Gail Witter - October 10, 2022 at 04:09 PM

MT

“ Oh my... where to begin? All the years, all I learned from her, all the laughs, all the ministry together, the friendships shared.... KO...a woman - small in stature but mighty in influence. Generous and as fun and funny as she was, she was also deep in thoughts, insights, faith...I will miss her always and cherish her memory and her friendship. ~ Mary Ann Turner 🦋

Mary Ann Turner - October 07, 2022 at 09:08 AM

LD

“ I have wonderful memories of serving with KO through Women4given and worshipping at Christ Church in Fairview Heights. She will always be fondly remembered. May her family and dearest friends receive peace and comfort from our Lord and Savior as they say their goodbyes for now. Linda Duncan

Linda Duncan - October 05, 2022 at 09:29 PM

WS

“ KO was simply, the best. My friend, my bible study partner, my mentor, my buddy - she and I could talk about anything and we did - every Sat morning! Polar opposite's in a few areas and we would discuss and agree to disagree. She encouraged everyone to give - she was so generous and thoughtful. KO was loyal - loved her family and friends and always called it the way she saw it. Honest, straightforward and such a hard worker - everything she did she gave it her all. ❤️❤️❤️

Wendy Smith - October 05, 2022 at 07:29 PM

RO

“ I became acquainted with KO at Christ church and then the Memorial Hospital Auxiliary. She was a delightfully spunky woman. In reading the obituary I learned that she was born in Donnellson, Illinois. I, too, was born in Donnellson, and my grandmother's middle name was Odell (no apostrophe) - Dahlia Odell Dunn Young. I wonder if there could be some relationship. My condolences to the family on your loss.

Rebecca Young (Boone) Olroyd

Rebecca Y Olroyd - October 05, 2022 at 04:59 PM



“ Kathy was a firm believer in giving to the church. Whenever we had a capital campaign at church, she would say, "We wouldn't need capital campaigns if people would just tithe like they should". She'll always be remembered by me.

Deborah Clark - October 05, 2022 at 02:44 PM

VP

“ KO was a treasured gift to so many. My husband Alan and I so enjoyed serving with her at Christ Church. We both learned so much from her on using our gifts to serve God. Her love for serving others was such a wonderful example for all of us to follow. She will be missed by all who knew her. Alan and Vanessa Prass

Vanessa & Alan Prass - October 05, 2022 at 02:36 PM