



## Susan "Sue" Fay Stafford Wakat

June 2, 1945 - January 27, 2026

Susan "Sue" Fay Stafford Wakat, 80, passed away on January 27, 2026, after unexpectedly falling ill at her home in McCordsville, Indiana, and later died at IU Health Fishers Hospital. She was born on June 2, 1945, in Indianapolis to Herbert Stafford and Kathryn Kipp, and was the younger sister of Barbara, who passed away in 1999.

Sue grew up in Indianapolis, graduating from Thomas Carr Howe High School before earning her degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign. On March 6, 1965, she married Emory ("Em") Wakat Jr. in Illinois, beginning a partnership marked by a core of deep affection, shared determination, and a lifelong sense of mutual respect. Together, they traveled the world – living in Tokyo for six years with daughter Barbara – and visiting as many spots as they could, including Moscow, Blarney Castle, South Africa and most anywhere. After Em's death in 1997, Sue carried his memory with her always.

After college, Sue pursued careers that were devoted to helping others - teaching, coaching and nursing. Early in her career as an educator, she worked to ensure that her students really understood the fundamentals (including her children). As an RN, she took on the care and responsibility for floors of patients and nurses often in demanding areas such as oncology and critical care. Her desire to help others extended well beyond her professional

roles. Sue used her skills to help children struggling with learning and, more particularly, she frequently offered informal medical guidance to anyone in need—friends, neighbors, and members of her community. People who knew her frequently said, simply, that she had a real impact on them.

She was the devoted mother of Bryan and Barbara, and the extremely proud grandmother of Sabrina, daughter of Barbara. Family was foundational for Sue; she worked endlessly to keep the different parts of the family together by writing in her travels, calling, capturing photos and sharing and visiting whenever she could. In particular, she drew her nieces - and their families - close, especially after the loss of their parents. She always kept in contact with her Kipp cousins, including inviting them to the Indy 500 – a legacy of her parents – when she could. She supported them with a steady, clear eyed presence that those who knew her came to rely on.

Sue was known for her directness, her quiet generosity, and a surprising kindness that only revealed itself fully in the way she cared for others. She was extremely tough—athletic in college and famously fierce in Motorola's co ed volleyball games, where she wasn't shy about jutting an elbow to hold her ground at the net. Em often relied on her to handle bureaucratic tangles because she simply wouldn't let anyone get away with nonsense.

Her lifelong passions reflected both her intellect and her sense of duty. She followed in her mother's footsteps as President of the American Bell Association, not out of obligation but out of a deep desire to keep the organization thriving. She saw what needed to be done and made sure it happened. She was also a voracious reader from childhood—starting with Hindu texts at age six, likely inspired by her great aunt, a missionary in India—and continuing through a lifetime of technical volumes, medical tomes, academic papers, and the occasional piece of pulp fiction.

Sue's generosity was quiet but unwavering. When hurricane victims in North

Carolina needed supplies, she loaded her car and drove them down herself. When a distant relative needed help moving across the country into a senior center, she simply showed up and made it happen. When an ABA member became disabled, she cleaned out their home without hesitation. She acted because it was the right thing to do, and she never waited to be asked.

She insisted on doing things her way—because her way was usually the necessary and right way. Whether navigating Tokyo traffic in a van she had refitted outside of code to accommodate the seats, or tracking down the doctor who would perform a procedure correctly, she approached every challenge with precision, resolve, and an unshakeable sense of what was proper.

Sue was a longtime member of Irvington United Methodist Church in Indianapolis, as were her parents, and she supported additional Methodist congregations such as her local church in McCordsville, Indiana and wherever her travels took her.

She was preceded in death by her husband Emory, her parents Herbert and Kathryn, and her sister Barbara. Surviving her are her son, Bryan (MaryLynn) Wakat; her daughter, Barbara Wakat; and her granddaughter, Sabrina Wakat. Additionally, she is survived by nieces Susan Rodgers (David Patschke) and Rebecca (Steve) Humphrey and their children.

A small service will be held at 11:00 a.m. CT, Saturday, March 21, 2026 at All Saints Cemetery in Bourbonnais, IL, followed by interment next to her husband, Em. A casual lunch will follow.

Sue leaves behind a legacy of strength, clarity, kindness, and quiet service—a life lived with purpose, conviction, and love.

Final arrangements and care are entrusted to Shirley Brothers Washington Memorial Chapel In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to The Marfan Foundation or the Humane Society of Broward County (Florida).

# Previous Events

## Graveside Service

MAR 21. 11:00 AM (CT)

All Saints Cemetery

1839 IL-102

Bourbonnais, IL 60914

# Tribute Wall



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Susan "Sue" Fay Stafford Wakat.



March 18 at 01:50 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Susan "Sue" Fay Stafford Wakat.

March 18 at 01:50 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Susan "Sue" Fay Stafford Wakat.



March 15 at 01:59 PM



“ Matthew B. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Susan "Sue" Fay Stafford Wakat.

Matthew B. - March 07 at 10:15 PM

MA

“ Your son is very important in my life, and you were very important in his life. By the transitive property you were extremely important in my life. Rest in peace Susan and may your memory live on in those who knew you.

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**Matt** - March 07 at 10:02 PM

BW

“ 34 files added to the album Lifetime



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**Bryan Wakat** - March 06 at 10:07 AM

LF

“ Love, Ms. Anne and your EDT family purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Susan "Sue" Fay Stafford Wakat.



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**Love, Ms. Anne and your EDT family** - March 05 at 11:41 PM

LF

“ Love, Ms. Anne and your EDT family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Susan "Sue" Fay Stafford Wakat.

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**Love, Ms. Anne and your EDT family** - March 05 at 11:41 PM