



Susan Best Gualandi (Coyle)



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Susan Best Gualandi (Coyle)

Susan Best Gualandi (Coyle) passed away at her home in Memphis, TN on Saturday, September 14, 2019. She is survived by her loving husband of 23 years, Richard J. Gualandi, and many family and friends. Susie was born Susan Marie Coyle on July 4, 1949 to Shirley and Robert H. Coyle in Peoria, IL. She was the eldest of six children, Robert Michael (Lynn) Coyle of Rockford, IL, Bonnie (Hugh) Calvert of The Villages, FL, Timothy Coyle, Peter (Katherine) Coyle of Peoria, IL, and Colleen Coyle (Chris) Mathis of Tucson, AZ. Susie graduated from Bergan High School, and earned a Bachelor of Pharmacy degree from the University of Illinois Chicago in 1972. Subsequently, she served as a graduate pharmacist with S&C Drugs in Peoria, IL, as well as the Indian Hospital in Pine Ridge, SD, from 1974 to 1976. Susie married David G. Best in 1970, with whom she had four children. She married Richard J. Gualandi in 1996, sharing six children between them. Having completed a Masters of Art, in 1986 Susie was awarded a Masters of Fine Art at Illinois State University and launched into a new direction making abstract art and landscape paintings. She worked as an art instructor for various institutions including Illinois State University, Bradley University and Illinois Central College between 1988 and 1993, and more recently at Memphis College of Art. As a testament to her success, Susie was a recipient of the Percent for Art Award from the City of New Orleans in 1997. She was presented with a fellowship from Illinois State University between 1988 and 1991, as well as various other awards including two grants from the Illinois Arts Council in 1995. Also, her teaching career at Bradley University included the honor of being the first faculty member who, with her students, won the annual “Faculty Student Abstract” award in the early 1990s. Her achievements were recognized in the bicentennial editions of Who’s Who in America and Who’s Who of American Woman. In April of 2019, she was presented with Albert Nelson Marquis Lifetime Achievement Award by Marquis Who’s Who honoring her leadership in art and education. Throughout her teaching career, she worked as a studio artist, presenting



Obituary

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her artwork in galleries across the country, and loved nothing more than traveling the world to see and make art. An active member in her communities throughout the years, she has served on the board of directors for St. Thomas School in Peoria and the Peoria Art Guild, and as visiting artist and instructor with Longue Vue House and Gardens in New Orleans, LA. In 1994, Susie reconnected with her high school sweetheart Richard J. Gualandi, and after months of long-distance catching up, they were married on December 20, 1996 in New Orleans, LA where they lived until 2005. Their years in New Orleans were very happy with a constant stream of guests and visitors welcomed warmly into their historic home in Algiers Point. Hurricane Katrina brought them to Memphis, TN where Susie converted a warehouse space into an art studio and continued to teach painting and drawing. Her talent, energy and intellect endures in our hearts and surrounds us in the art she created. Susie is survived by her mother, Shirley Coyle, Peoria, IL; husband Richard J. Gualandi, Memphis, TN; her children Tim (Marcy) Best, Plano, TX; Molly (Matt) DeJohn, Newton, MA; Abby (Chris) Hammes, Madison, WI; George Best, Boston, MA; Richard (Michelle) Gualandi, Asheville, NC; Heyward (Michelle) Gualandi, Ft. Collins, CO; and seven grandchildren Madeline and Anthony DeJohn, Julianna and Ethan Hammes, Timmy and Ella Best, and Eric Gualandi. She was preceded in death by her father, Robert H. Coyle and brother, Timothy Coyle. A visitation will be held from 2 – 4pm, followed by a memorial service on Saturday, September 28, 2019 at Wright and Salmon Funeral Home; 2416 N. North Street in Peoria, IL. In lieu of flowers, the family has requested donations be made to The Southern Poverty Law Center (<https://www.splcenter.org/>) or Planned Parenthood (<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/>).



Tribute Wall

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Chayannan Jaide posted:

My heart is breaking and my condolences to Abby Hammes and your family and to the many others whose lives your mother, Susan Best Gualandi (Coyle), touched. May my prayers bring you comfort and ease the pain of this loss.

September 24 at 8:19 AM



Ellen Cannon posted:

My heart is breaking...and my deepest condolences go out to Rick and all of Susie's nearest and dearest. Farewell my dear old friend, you brightened my life across the decades...BEYOND THE HORIZON A ship sails and I stand watching till she fades on the horizon and someone at my side says, 'She is gone!' Gone where? Gone from my sight, that is all. She is just as large now as when I last saw her. Her diminished size and total loss from my sight is in me, not in her. And just at the moment when someone at my side says, 'She is gone,' there are others who are watching her coming over their horizon, and other voices take up a glad shout, 'There she comes!' That is what dying is... a horizon and just the limit of our sight. ~Bishop Brent~

September 18 at 5:39 AM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Susan by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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