

Grantville, KS



Caroline A. (Flagg) Bigham of Grantville, Kansas, passed away peacefully in her sleep at her daughter's home. She is preceded in death by her beloved husband Bob, her sister Lois Jean, her brother Paul, and parents Donald and Lois (McHenry) Flagg. She is survived by her children Randy, Robin (Jed), Beth, and Jennifer (Joe); her grandchildren Brian (Krista), Cara (Aidrich), Jill (Ryan), Paige (Zane), Anne (Drew), Jacob (Karla), Jessica, and J.R. (Nicole); and by 11 great-grandchildren.

Caroline was born in Sioux Falls, South Dakota on July 14, 1932. She graduated from Grantville Elementary School, valedictorian—and only girl—in a class of 6. She graduated from Perry High School in 1950, where she was a cheerleader, soloist, actress, class officer, year book editor and representative to Girls' State. She was also a member of the Grantville 4-H Club, MYF, and Jefferson County Council.

She married her childhood sweetheart, Robert C. "Bob" Bigham in 1950 and had four children. She was a lifelong member of the Grantville United Methodist church, where she sang in the choir for 50 years, taught Sunday School, co-chaired church dinners, served as lay leader, was a longtime lay member to AC, and a WSCS/UMW member for 72 years. To Caroline, the mission work of the church—helping those in need—was a lifelong passion.

Her service to the Grantville community included all offices of the PTA and of HDU/HEU. She was a 4-H leader for 20 years, teaching junior leaders who won state awards in the Health, Safety, Citizenship, and People-to-People projects; overseeing project talks, demonstrations, and model meetings; as well as teaching 4-Hers to work with local government to serve their community through such projects as street lights and a fire department for Grantville—and a county health nurse.

Caroline chaired the Jefferson County Public Health Advisory Board for 25 years; served as UMW District VP (4 years) and President (2 years); served as UMW Conference VP (4 years), Mission Chair and Membership Chair (2 years), Board of Global Ministries (5 Years, which included planning Conference mission trips to India and Africa). She helped raise funds for a new church building in Bombay. She also served as a Certified Rural Chaplain, presenting sermons or mission programs in 83 churches—and reported on the Kansas East Conference of

the UMC's missions to a large audience.

She loved to travel. As a partial list, she walked the Continental Divide in deep mid-winter snow and in August sun. She learned to snow ski at 45, walked to the bottom of the Grand Canyon and back at 50, walked on the white sand at Diamond Head (Waikiki), and shared a row boat in a storm on a Minnesota lake. She floated a clear river in Missouri with family and friends, looked at Plymouth Rock, gambled in Las Vegas, slept in a tent in the Rockies, visited the giant Sequoias, played in the waves of the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian oceans, flew to South Africa and to Zimbabwe, slept in an inn in Bethlehem, saw the reflection of the Taj Mahal at dawn in Agra, rode in a taxi in Mexico and on an elephant in Jaipur. She flew to Katmandu in Nepal, floated on the Mekong in Bangkok and on the Ganges, explored the old county-seat towns in Kansas, enjoyed the view from the Empire State Building in NYC, saw the London Bridge on the Thames, heard operas in a gym at KU and at the Kennedy Center in Washington DC, met women in Zululand and Swaziland, ate chapattis with a Bishop in Lucknow.

Caroline loved her family deeply. She and Bob built a home and lived there together for almost 60 years, farming, raising children, serving church and community, and enjoying all that life offered. Her relationship with her grown children transitioned to close friendship with each. Caroline also celebrated her extended family, loving each nephew and niece and appreciating the individuality of each. And in the next generation, Caroline cuddled, laughed and played with 8 grandbabies—and watched them grow up. Her great-grandchildren were another rich source of joy, and if they were far away, she sent them many letters (& stickers). On the last day of her life, she met her newest great-grandson and delighted in the antics of her 6- and 4-year-old great-grandsons and her 1-year-old great-granddaughter. That last night, she talked and laughed with her daughter and granddaughter until almost midnight, making plans for the next day—and for her 90th birthday party in July.

She often marveled that she achieved so many of her dreams, despite the lean years that are part of farm life. She found time to work outside the home for 26 years—as bookkeeper at CG & F Elevator, as co-manager at Steve Smith AV, and as a program planner at the Kansas East Conference Office of the UMC. She often said that her life was joyful because she had “always been so loved,” and everything she did was rooted in that love which she returned in full measure.

Visitation will be held Friday, May 6, 2022, 5:30-7:30 p.m. at the Grantville UM Church.

A service to celebrate her life will be held on Saturday, May 7, 2022 at 10:30 a.m.—also at the Grantville Church. If you are unable to attend, you are invited to join the live streaming on the following Facebook site: <https://www.facebook.com/grantvillechurch/>

Or on the following Grantville UMC website [Live Church Service – Grantville United Methodist Church](#).