

Overland Park and Hiawatha , KS

Rita Kay Haley passed away on October 21, 2023, in Overland Park, Kan., at the age of 76.

Born on October 12, 1947, in Sabetha, Kan., Rita was the first child of Warren and Gertrude “Gert” Gatz of Hiawatha, Kan. Rita attended grade school, middle school and high school in Hiawatha, graduating from Hiawatha High School in 1965. After attending Emporia State University, Rita moved to Topeka, Kansas, where she devoted her professional career to public service for the State of Kansas in the State Library. Among her many responsibilities, she was the person who researched and provided answers to questions posed by the public and legislators concerning the Kansas Legislature.

Rita was united in marriage to Robert (Bob) Haley on June 30, 1979, in St. Ann's Catholic Church, Hiawatha, Kansas. To this union was born one daughter Brittany. Rita and Bob were active sports parents, supporting their daughter- interest in soccer, basketball, and softball.

Before Rita- retirement in 2005, the State of Kansas honored her in the House and the Senate for her years of public service.

Upon retiring, Rita moved to Aurora, Colo., where her husband had accepted a position with the State of Colorado. Rita was an avid reader and walker. Even in inclement weather, Rita would bundle up and walk several miles.

After Bob- retirement, the couple returned to Kansas in 2021, moving to Overland Park.

Rita was predeceased by her parents Warren and Gert Gatz and her Grandparents Antone and Dora Gerweck and Henry and Frieda Gatz.

Rita is survived by her husband Bob Haley of the home; daughter Brittany Haley of Parsons, Kan.; brother Roger Gatz (Peggy) of Hiawatha, Kan.; and sister Teres Lambert (John Krueger) of Windsor, Colo., one niece Holly Holland and four nephews, Taylor Gatz, Trey Lambert, Walker Gatz and Parker Gatz and their respective families.

Friends may sign register book at Chapel Oaks Funeral Home, Hiawatha after 10 a.m. Wednesday.

Graveside services are planned for 1 p.m. Thursday, November 2, at Mt. Hope Cemetery, Hiawatha. Father Dan Gardner will officiate.

Memorial contributions are suggested to Alzheimer- Association sent in care of Chapel Oaks Funeral Home, 124 S 7th St., Hiawatha 66434.

A special message may be left with the family at www.chapeloaksfuneralhome.com

