

Sabetha, KS



Mary Ruth Yulich, 91, of Sabetha, Kansas, went home to the Lord on Sunday, January 12, 2025, at the Apostolic Christian Home in Sabetha.

Mary Ruth was born on August 10, 1933, in Kansas City, Kansas to Roy Lee Purcell and Elna Pearl (Douglas) Purcell. As an only child, grandchild, and niece, Mary Ruth was deeply loved.

During high school, Mary Ruth played the trumpet and piano, sang in the school choir, performed in school plays, and served as editor of the school newspaper and yearbook. Mary Ruth graduated from Argentine High School in 1941 and continued her education at the University of Kansas School of Nursing, where she earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 1956. Mary Ruth began her professional nursing career at Bethany Medical Center in Kansas City, Kansas.

On June 10, 1956, Mary Ruth married her high school sweetheart, Dr. John O. Yulich. After the birth of their children, Mary Ruth chose to leave her nursing career to raise them and this amazing woman actively contributed her time and talents to several organizations, including the Junior League of Kansas City, serving as President of both the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), and participating in the Eastern Star organization, Bridge Club, Theater League of Kansas City, and Historical Grinter House. Additionally, she was involved in organizations linked to her children, serving as Cub Scout Leader for her sons, Blue Bird Leader for her daughter, school room mother, and actively participating in her church community.

During the summer months, Mary Ruth enjoyed taking her family on daily adventures to Lake Quivira for swimming and golf lessons. Summer was also a time for family vacations, many of which were spent with their family friends, the Sullivans, Jack and Judy Sullivan, and their three children, Susan, Connie, and John-John. Some of the most memorable vacations included traveling in the 1973 Ford Country Squire, affectionately known as “The Big Blue Boat.”

Mary Ruth and Dr. Yulich divorced in 1977, and she returned to school to obtain her registered nursing recertification. As a strong and independent woman, Mary Ruth worked as a registered nurse while funding not only her college education but her children's education as well. In 1984, Mary Ruth married Pastor Marvin Rannabargar, gaining a daughter, Ruth. She always considered Ruth and Ruth's family as her blood family.

Mary Ruth continued her educational pursuits by earning a Master of Healthcare Administration degree in 1985. During this time, she also engaged in civic services, becoming President of the Kansas Nurses Association, where one of her greatest accomplishments was improving nursing salaries across Kansas. She was a member of the PEO organization, an elder at the Emerson Park Christian Church in Kansas City, Kansas, and was actively involved in her C.U. Sunday Class. Moreover, she volunteered and fundraised for Cross-Lines Retirement Center in Kansas City, Kansas.

From 1986 until her retirement in 1995, Mary Ruth served as Vice President at Cushing Memorial Hospital in Leavenworth, Kansas. However, due to boredom, her retirement only lasted two months, after which she returned to her nursing career, working for local school districts and the Shawnee Mission Medical Center in Merriam, Kansas.

In 2016, Mary Ruth moved to Sabetha to be closer to her daughter, Joy. She enjoyed being part of the Trinity Church of the Brethren community and contributing to the Sabetha Senior Community. Mary Ruth traveled the world with her children and grandchildren, her good friend, Ann Hess, and the self-named "Galivantin Grannies," ErmaLee Meditz, and Jean Rowland. Mary Ruth also shared her life with beloved pets including dogs (her favorite being the collies), cats, and horses. Mary Ruth even tolerated her children's collections of various rodents and reptiles, including a rather pretentious Dilly the Duck for 19 years. She loved cooking, entertaining family and friends, hosting events for organizations, being a season ticket holder and fan of the Kansas City Chiefs, participating in the Huddle Club, enjoying Disney, puzzles, coloring, and taking her grandkids to symphonies and ballet performances.

One of her remarkable qualities was her deep commitment to the youth who entered her life during her children's high school and college years. She welcomed the entire football team over regularly after practice and hosted youth groups multiple times a week. During holidays, she opened her home to her children's friends, especially those with nowhere to go, all of whom continue to call her "Mom." Mary Ruth still holds a special place in their hearts. Her grace-filled spirit made her warm and approachable, she never knew a stranger. She gave warm hugs and spread compassion to others as often as she gave her grandchildren treats. Her family is comforted by the many people who continue to share stories of how she impacted their lives.

Mary Ruth was preceded in death by her parents, Roy Lee and Elna Pearl Purcell; and her husbands, Dr. John O. Yulich and Pastor Marvin Rannabargar.

Mary Ruth is survived by her four children, Mark (Denise) Yulich, Mitch (Cindy) Yulich, Joy (Nazario) Wilcock, and Ruth (Charles) Lockhart; her nine grandchildren, Brett

(Khrista), Gretchen (Bradley), Jordan (Kristi), Emily, Jenni (Josh), Will AKA Hanna (Erich), Makenna, Elisha (Joshua), and Lita; and her eight great-grandchildren.

Mary Ruth will lie in state at the Popkess Mortuary on Friday, January 17, 2025, and Monday, January 20, 2025, for those wishing to sign her register book. A funeral service will be held on Tuesday, January 21, 2025, at 9:30 a.m. at the Popkess Mortuary Chapel in Sabetha.

A visitation will be held on Tuesday, January 21, 2025, from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Chapel Hill Funeral Home and Memorial Gardens at 701 N. 94th Street, Kansas City, Kansas. At 3:00 p.m., a funeral service will be held at the Chapel Hill Funeral Home and Memorial Gardens. Interment will be made in the Chapel Hill Funeral Home and Memorial Gardens.

Memorial contributions are suggested in memory of Mary Ruth Yulich to the Apostolic Christian Assisted Living Activities Department or the University of Kansas Alumni Association sent in care of Popkess Mortuary, 823 Virginia Street, Sabetha, Kansas 66534. Condolences can be shared online at www.popkessmortuaries.com.