



Susan Centner

June 15, 1956 - December 25, 2023

Susan was known for her passions to educate, serve, and help people as well as her love for family and friends. Susan Centner, 67, of Rolla, Missouri, passed away at her home from a heart attack.

Susan was born in North Tonawanda, New York, in 1956 to Catherine and Rodney Centner.

She met her devoted husband, Phil Rufe, in 1991 while working as a librarian at Harvey Barracks in Kitzingen, Germany, where Phil was serving as a 1st Lieutenant in the Army. Their story almost ended before it began as Phil was running a bit late for their first date, and she was getting ready to drive away when he arrived. She forgave him, the relationship blossomed, and the two were married in August 1993 by family friend Rev. Marcy Orr in Covesville, Virginia. They recently celebrated their 30th anniversary. Susan filled many roles in Phil's life, and he treasured her as a partner, friend, coach, mentor, cheerleader, and source of common sense.

Susan and Phil forged a blended family with three children: Franz G. Kindel, Karl C. Kindel (Elizabeth Sperry), and Julia J.C. Rufe (Dustin Taylor). All the children reside and work in Rolla, Missouri.

Susan cherished time with family and friends, Christmas, reading, true crime podcasts and TV shows, travel, and spending time on lakes, rivers, and the beach. Both Susan and Phil enjoyed traveling and made many memorable trips in the United States and abroad. With family in Washington, Hawaii,

California, Virginia, Wisconsin, New York, and Florida, she and Phil made many trips to those locations.

Susan treasured her time with her grandchildren and loved being their grandmother, never failing to celebrate a birthday or attend a school program. Above all she loved being on or near water, and she and Phil spent most years from 2003 to 2022 taking a mix of children and grandchildren on a summer trip to Bull Shoals Lake for boating, swimming, and other summer fun.

Susan held two bachelor's degrees: one in Chemistry and one in Nursing. She worked a variety of nursing jobs before moving to Germany with her first husband, who had joined the Army. While in Germany she worked at the post library which she enjoyed and excelled at. Her work life was split between nursing and librarianship until she was able to combine them by becoming a medical reference librarian. The job she held longest (23+ years) and from which she retired was as the medical reference librarian for the Missouri Area Health Education Center (MAHEC) Mid-Missouri Region. Here she met her best friends Jan Shipley, Barb Jones, and Brian Andrews. It was also where she co-founded the MAHEC Digital Library (MDL) in partnership with staff from the University of Missouri Health Sciences Library. Susan was passionate about education and healthcare, and the MDL provided access to healthcare information to medical practitioners and students across the state of Missouri, especially in underserved communities.

Susan believed in community service and was especially honored to support two organizations in Rolla. As a survivor of domestic violence herself, she spent many years volunteering at the Russell House (battered women's shelter) and serving on the Russell House Board of Directors. Susan also chaired the board that established Rolla's first Federally Qualified Health Center now known as Four Rivers Community Health Center.

Everyone who knew Susan knew how much she loved True Crime books, television shows, and podcasts. She was a voracious reader consuming all sorts of books and news in addition to True Crime. During the Covid pandemic

she picked up an interest in gardening, raising vegetables and flowers on her back deck which the entire family enjoyed.

Susan will always be remembered for her intelligence, humor, quick wit and the way that she engaged with family and friends. She touched so many lives. We couldn't have asked for a better partner, mother, grandmother, friend, and we will miss Susan every day. Her memory will live on in the hearts of all those who loved her.

Susan had a big heart. She was always quick to show people love, kindness, compassion, understanding... the list could go on. Susan made a positive impact on everyone she met and will be remembered for giving unconditional love and support to family and friends. Other qualities that her family admired were her resilience, stubbornness, independence, and determination.

Susan was preceded in death by her parents, Catharine and Rodney Centner, and is survived by her husband (Phil Rufe); son Franz G. Kindel; son Karl C. Kindel (Elizabeth Sperry); daughter Julia J.C. Rufe (Dustin Taylor); grandson Hunter Kindel of St Charles, MO; granddaughter Mia

Sperry (Cody) of Colorado Springs, Colorado; grandson Ezra Kindel of Rolla, Missouri; grandson Gabriel Kindel of Rolla, Missouri; granddaughter Pheobe Sperry of Rolla, Missouri; and

granddaughter Marlea Kindel of Rolla, Missouri. She is also survived by her sister, Linda DiPasquale (Mario) of Renton, Washington, four nieces, and numerous grandnieces, grandnephews, and cousins.

There will be a family visitation/celebration of life for Susan on 13 January 2024 from 2:00 – 4:00 pm at the James & Gahr Mortuary at 1651 Missouri Highway 72 in Rolla, Missouri. In lieu of flowers, donations to the Russell House [<https://russellhousemo.org/>] would be greatly appreciated.

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN 13. 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM (CT)

James & Gahr Mortuary - Rolla
1651 E. Hwy 72
Rolla, MO 65401
(573) 458-2262
jgrolla@hotmail.com
<https://www.jamesgahrmortuary.com/>

Funeral Service

JAN 13. 4:00 PM (CT)

James & Gahr Mortuary - Rolla
1651 E. Hwy 72
Rolla, MO 65401
(573) 458-2262
jgrolla@hotmail.com
<https://www.jamesgahrmortuary.com/>

Tribute Wall



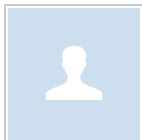
“ Phil, we were all so sorry to learn of Susan's passing. From reading her tribute, she was a wonderful woman. Our deepest condolences to you and your children and grandchildren. USMA Class 1988

Shelly Muhlenkamp - January 28, 2024 at 09:04 PM



“ NGTOC Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Susan Centner.

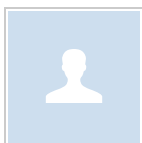
NGTOC Family - January 12, 2024 at 02:28 PM



“ Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of Susan Centner.



January 12, 2024 at 02:28 PM



“ Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Susan Centner.



January 12, 2024 at 02:11 PM

MS

“ My Condolences, Russ Summers planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Susan Centner.

My Condolences, Russ Summers - January 11, 2024 at 03:34 PM

MS

“ My Condolences, Russ Summers purchased the Beautiful Heart Bouquet for the family of Susan Centner.



My Condolences, Russ Summers - January 11, 2024 at 03:34 PM

TF

“ The Ikuenobe Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Susan Centner.

The Ikuenobe Family - January 10, 2024 at 11:00 PM



“ Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Susan Centner.



January 10, 2024 at 11:00 PM

DB

“ Dale and Sherry Barnard purchased the Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet for the family of Susan Centner.



Dale and Sherry Barnard - January 10, 2024 at 08:16 PM

DB

“ Dale and Sherry Barnard planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Susan Centner.

Dale and Sherry Barnard - January 10, 2024 at 08:16 PM

KK

“ 1 file added to the album Susan



karl kindel - January 10, 2024 at 10:08 AM

SA

“ Sam A planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Susan Centner.

Sam A - January 10, 2024 at 08:33 AM

SA

“ Sam A purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Susan Centner.



Sam A - January 10, 2024 at 08:33 AM

ES

“ Susan will always be remembered as a strong and supportive mother! She cared deeply for her family. One of the first times I got to spend with her alone was when I was planning my wedding. We went to St Louis to a Bridal Show. We had so much fun imagining all the crazy things we could do at my wedding. Some of the booths were so over the top! It gave us a good laugh. I have a Photo Booth picture in my memory box of that day and it'll be treasured forever. I am so blessed to have had her for a mother in law.

Elizabeth Sperry - January 09, 2024 at 09:08 PM

TF

“ Thanks for sharing Susan's passion for MDL and Russell House. Our deepest condolences. Tracy and Pamela Fuller

Tracy and Pam Fuller - January 09, 2024 at 05:26 PM