



Ms. Rita Marie Rhodes

November 8, 1946 - February 14, 2019

Rita Marie Rhodes, 72, of Columbia, died unexpectedly Thursday, February 14, 2019. Born November 8, 1946, in Chicago, Illinois, she was a daughter of the late Charles Arthur and Mary Ellen Garvey Rhodes.

Rita was a retired tenured faculty professor at the University of South Carolina in the College of Social Work. Prior to working at the university, she was a social worker at the former Richland Memorial Hospital and the Family Service Center.

After retirement Rita continued mentoring students and working part time. She loved her students and touched the lives of so many social workers in SC. Rita dedicated her life to helping others. She passionately worked as a strong advocate for social justice, and the needs and rights of women and children. She continued to do so as an active member of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America until her passing.

She was loved by so many cherished friends, including Non Bridge, Goddesses, and Ex's.

Rita was a devoted mother and leaves behind her daughter Katherine Whitney Mathisen-Glisson (Scottie); son David Arthur Kyle Mathisen (Heather Brooke Cantrell); sister, Charlene A. Rhodes (Steven R. Larson); and her beloved golden retriever Lacey.

A memorial service to celebrate the life of Rita Rhodes will be held at 11 o'clock, on June 8, 2019, at The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Columbia, 2701 Heyward Street, Columbia, SC. Shives Funeral Home, Trenholm Road Chapel, is assisting the family.

In lieu of flowers, please contribute to the local animal rescue, women's shelter, or children's advocacy group of your choice.

Comments



“ Dr. Rhodes was one of my favorite professors during my 2 years as an MSW student (2003-2005). She had a sense of humor and a "realness" that I so appreciated and she approached sensitive or taboo topics directly with sensibility and honesty. Rita was caring and I distinctly remember a phone conversation with her that taught me one of the most valuable lessons that I still use in my practice today, using her exact words. I am so sorry she is not on planet earth anymore. My MSW experience meant so much to me and was all the more enriched because she was a part of it. RIP, Dr. Rhodes!

Djuna Osborne - June 10, 2019 at 06:33 PM



“ I met Rita 35 years ago. I felt a connection immediately. She was from the same South Chicago neighborhood where I grew up. Over the years, Rita was an important source of support for me. She was kind and gentle and so smart! Her death leaves a hole in my heart. I will miss her very much.
Deb Valentine

deborah valentine - March 05, 2019 at 01:08 PM



“ I knew Rita when she was a novice at Wheaton. She was delightfully friendly and funny, and kind. Her humorous comments came from careful listening to conversations and situations. She worked in puns and and playfulness especially when I was struggling. I have always been very grateful for her friendship in those early days.
Mary Carton, IBVM

Mary - February 25, 2019 at 02:43 PM



“ Dear Katherine and David,

I sure loved your mom. Jennifer Gilmore and Ann Johnson (other big Rita fans) did me the great favor of including me in gatherings with your mom. There are few hearts bigger than Rita's. I cannot begin to know the number of people she helped over the years. I just know the number was a big one. How much better would the world be if more people were like your mom? She was a loyal friend to her buddies which was another one of my favorite things about Rita. Yoga, hiking, opera, dogs, politics and students have lost an advocate. Your mom talked about you two, her beloved children, so often. There was no doubt she was incredibly proud of y'all and that she loved you more than anyone or anything in this world. What a beautiful human your mom was. I am so glad that I got to be included in her life over the past few years. I will miss her a lot. Healing and loving thoughts are being sent your way.
Maria Parker

Maria Parker - February 23, 2019 at 02:45 PM



“ Katherine and David, your Mom was so proud of you two, and loved you more than anything or anyone. I can still hear her distinct laugh---she appreciated all kinds of humor.
Karen Gray

Karen - February 23, 2019 at 07:45 PM