

DONOR STORIES

RUTH M. HUNTLEY

“Ruth M. Huntley Family Fund”

Ruth Ester Marie Jago Huntley or Ruth M. Huntley as she was known, was born in Waterloo, Iowa November 29, 1908 and died on April 14, 2000 at the age of 91. She will be remembered for her easy smile, her upbeat attitude and her worldwide travels.



RUTH HUNTLEY

Ruth's family immigrated to the United States from Hamburg, Germany in 1886. Her father, John C. Jago, was born at sea on the Lord Cough in 1886, one of seven children. Relatives tell us that when John was born, his one-year old brother died at about the same time. The boy's body was placed in a wash basket and the newly born John was placed over him to avoid burial at sea. John was a suit designer and cutter by trade; then a car salesman, outboard motor salesman and game warden in Black Hawk County.

Ruth's mother, Caroline “Carrie” Henrietta Engle, was born in Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania on Christmas Day 1886. John and Carrie had only one child, Ruth, who grew up in Waterloo. The family lived on Sycamore Street in the early days and spent summers on the Cedar River, enjoying their cabin in San Souci, swimming and boating. Ruth often bragged about learning to drive a boat before she got her license to drive a car.

Ruth worked as a hotel stenographer after graduating from East High School. She married Don Z. Huntley the son of a young widow, on June 17, 1939 at First Lutheran Church. They had two daughters, Lynda Kay born in 1943 and Donna Fay born in 1944. The family resided on Arlington Street in Waterloo for many years, moving to Cedar Falls in 1953.

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Ruth and Don owned and operated the Great State Insurance Agency, where Ruth served as a licensed insurance agent, bookkeeper and part owner until they retired in the mid 1970's. Lynda and Donna also worked for the agency throughout their high school and college years. As a family they took time to enjoy life and frequently traveled. They visited every state in the Union except Rhode Island and Alaska.

After Don passed away in 1978, Ruth continued to manage her own affairs and was meticulous with financial records and tax returns. As a single woman, she managed to travel to 35 countries in the last 20 years of her life, often with groups led by Bob and Bonnie Humble. She was always ready for adventure including white water rafting, balloon rides over the jungle, climbing mountain trails, exploring ancient ruins or relaxing on many cruises all over the world.

People who knew Ruth will remember that she always said, “I’m fine”, no matter what was happening in her life. Ruth “kept in shape” by picking up sticks everyday in her huge yard on Cedar Heights Drive,

raking leaves, mowing the yard and sweeping the garage. Every week she drove her bright blue car to the library where she checked out books on the Old West or famous people in history or novels about life in other countries. Most likely because of her very active lifestyle and positive outlook on life, she was fortunate to enjoy excellent health until late 1999 when incurable cancer was discovered.

Ruth also enjoyed visiting her daughters and their families, Donna in California and Lynda in Waterloo and more recently in Illinois. Her four grandchildren were a great delight to her and she got to spend many holidays with them. They will always remember “Grandma Ruth” for her love of adventure and lively parties.

Throughout her life, Ruth was an active member of the church at First Lutheran in Waterloo and at St. Paul’s Lutheran in Cedar Falls. She also volunteered at the Lutheran Home and supported the YWCA, Girl Scouts, Goodwill Industries and many environmental organizations. Ruth also attended almost every symphony concert and show that was offered in Waterloo and at the University of Northern Iowa.

Ruth believed that her contribution to the Community Foundation would perpetuate support for many organizations that would continue to receive contributions after her death. It is in her spirit that the Ruth M. Huntly Family Fund was established in 1999.