



Kay Frances Dirks

April 2, 1942 - July 25, 2022

Kay Frances (Honsinger) Dirks passed peacefully from this world on 7/25/2022, attended by loving family members.

Born April 2, 1942, she was a lifelong resident of eastern Washington.

Her passion was children, and she spent her adult life encouraging their love of fun and learning.

Graduating from Palouse High School in 1960, she went on to graduate from Washington State University in 1964. She then taught for a time in Quincy schools before joining the North Central Washington Library system as the librarian of first the Quincy and then the Ephrata City Libraries, a position she held for more than three decades. Over that time, she became known to generations of Columbia Basin children, showing them how to find learning fun and important.

Her belief in the power of books began early, when as a child she would drag her younger brother and sister to the tiny library sited above the jail cells in Palouse, and when she would later bring them home books from her college readings, enlarging their view of the world and changing the course of their lives.

Two generations of her nieces and nephews knew her as “My Nanny Kay”, famous for bringing games, crafts, and learning projects to family holiday gatherings.

The adults in her family shared in the fun of holiday projects, but also knew her for her dedicated pursuit of her family’s genealogy, which she traced through Okanogan Valley and Northern Idaho pioneer ancestors to roots in Georgia, Canada, and eventually, northern Europe.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Dr. Richard Honsinger and Lucille (Whitley) Honsinger; her husband, Waldo Dirks, and her sister-in-law, Marian Honsinger.

She is survived by her son, Nic Dirks, his wife Cristie (Moses Lake); her sister, Holly Cupp (Chuck, Chewelah); brother Dr. Richard Honsinger (Los Alamos, NM); brother Bruce Honsinger (Dianne, Winthrop); longtime friend and fellow librarian the Reverend Ellie Shapton (Moses Lake); numerous beloved nieces and nephews, and generations of eastern Washington children who gained a love of learning from her.

Donations in her memory may be made to Friends of the Ephrata Library, 45 Alder St. N., Ephrata, WA, 98823.

Tribute Wall

“ Kay was a role model, mentor, and inspiration in my younger years during the 80s. Because of Kay's influence, I grew to love libraries, and volunteering.

I first met Kay when I had a paper route and delivered the Wenatchee World to the Quincy Library. Kay was always friendly and welcoming to me every day, and I eventually started volunteering for her; spending most of my spare time at the Library. She would have me check out books for patrons, shelve books, and help people with the copy machine, microfiche and microfilm. She would trust me with taking care of the Library's fish tank, feeding the branch cat, and taking care of the chinchillas. Eventually, she trusted me so much that she gave me a key to the library so I could come in to empty the bookdrop before the Library opened. That was a big honor for someone that young. With that small key, she also gave me responsibility and respect, which are invaluable gifts to a kid.

She was the glue that held it all together, and she had the charm to easily recruit good people to keep the library operating and make it into a valuable community resource for everyone who came through the door. One time, there was a homeless man who was traveling through Quincy along the railroad tracks. He came to the Library for a safe place to sit and rest. He was dirty and smelled, but Kay said he had as much right to be there as anyone did, and she wouldn't ask him to leave. She contacted a local church to see if they could help him, which they did. She respected everyone, and that act of kindness to a stranger down on his luck exemplified what a good person she was.

My favorite memory of Kay was her excitement for the Summer Reading Program. She would buy decorations for the branch out of her own pocket, because things like that weren't in the budget. She wanted to make the Library a special place for everyone who came into the branch, and transport them to a place of wonder, just like the books that she encouraged people to read.

Then one day, Kay brought something new to the Library called "Teddy Ruxpin" to share with everyone. Back then, it was a sophisticated piece of technology, and everyone was in awe! We were all amazed how this thing would move and tell stories, but Kay didn't want it to replace a real person during storytime. She loved reading to kids, and they would gather at her feet to listen intently to every word.

Kay would frequently talk about her family in Chewela, and I felt like I knew every one of them personally, although I never met them. She loved them so much, and I would look forward to hearing about them and what they were doing.

Rest in peace, Kay. You loved many, and were greatly loved in return.

Eric T. Sorlien - August 09, 2022 at 11:07 PM

LS

“ Kay wasn't just any Nanny she was my actual aunt. Her husband was my mom's brother. My mom, Melinda now lives in Lynnwood. My name is Linda Schmidt. When my husband and I moved to Ephrata with our three kids in 1997 I was telling my dad about this wonderful lady at the library. He shared that it was my aunt and that made all of us very happy. Over the next years Nanny Kay and our family developed a lovely friendship and bond. She was always interested in what the kids were up to and provided moral support for all of us. If I was in need of a hug, smile and positive pep talk I knew I could stop in to the library and see Kay. Ellie was always there to chat it up with the kids and help make us all feel welcome. Sadly, when Kay retired I did not keep in touch and that is something I regret. She would be so proud of our kids and now two granddaughters. I hope she found peace in knowing that she truly made people happy, feel loved and supported. There will always be a place in our hearts for our Nanny Kay.

Linda Schmidt - August 09, 2022 at 10:15 AM

CA

“ Cenie Appling. lit a candle in memory of Kay Frances Dirks



Cenie Appling. - August 03, 2022 at 12:19 PM