

Marquette family is mourning beloved instructor Ruth Klaus

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
January 25 2018 6:00 AM



ALTON - When Ruth Klaus stepped into a room it seemed a little magic followed her.

Klaus had a beauty and charisma that drew everyone to her and with that a leadership type of personality that for 27 years guided the Marquette Catholic drama department and also with her humanities and English instructor work. She was also a dance team and cheerleading coach at Marquette.

Klaus, 66, died this week after a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer. Klaus was a resident of Maryville. Her funeral Mass will be at 10 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 25, at St. Mary's Church in Alton.

"Ruth had a charisma about her that just screamed out at you that I am a teacher and I am in charge," Marquette Catholic Principal Mike Slaughter said. Slaughter has been asked to do Ruth Klaus' funeral eulogy. He said he was touched and honored to be asked to perform that duty.

Klaus' personality and manner convinced students they would listen and learn from her.

"She was an amazing woman that could walk into a classroom and through the halls and there was no doubt this was a confident woman who knew what she was about and knew what teaching was all about," Slaughter said.

The Marquette Catholic principals said before Klaus joined the staff, the school had drama, but not musicals.

"She instituted musicals at Marquette and made diamonds out of our students," Slaughter said. "She brought kids that didn't really have business on stage singing, dancing and performing and brought the best out of them. The neat thing was a lot of these kids were stereotypical jocks and athletes. Some of the athletes shined more on her stage than they did on the athletic fields. She turned that whole program around and did musicals for 12 or 13 years."

The Marquette principal said Klaus taught until she couldn't teach anymore in her battle with cancer, but always showed courage and inspired the students.

"She said, 'Mike, I want to teach and I don't want to leave the classroom,'" Slaughter said. "We tried to make it possible, but the pancreatic cancer was too much and she finally did have to leave. We were the lesser for it. She was a star in the classroom and this whole building at Marquette."

Riverbender.com reporter Cory Davenport said Mrs. Klaus was one of the reasons he went into journalism.

"She gave me both the confidence and humility to improve my writing," Davenport said. "She made me believe that writing would make me not only a better communicator, but a well-rounded human being and inspired me to believe I could pursue it as a career. She was amazing and was my AP Composition teacher."

Davenport was just one of many from Marquette who will never forget what Principal Slaughter called "an amazing and beloved teacher and mentor."

"She loved these kids and they loved her," Slaughter concluded.

Surviving are her husband of 44 years John Klaus of Maryville, IL; her children, John L. (Joseph) Klaus II of Palatine, IL, Brett J. Klaus of Maryville, IL, and Stefanie A. (Scott) Ronald of O'Fallon, MO; her grandchild, Noah; her brothers, Robert (Kathryn) Diak of Edwardsville, IL, David (Kim) Diak of Edwardsville, IL, George (Nancy) Diak of Granite City, IL; her sister, Lynn (Tony) Diak - Bavinton of Victoria, Australia; her brother-in-law, Robert (Carol) Klaus of Alton, IL; as well as her sisters-in-law, Diana Howland of Wood River, IL, and Carole (Ralph) Biberdorf of Florissant, MO.

This is a Facebook page in memory of Ruth Klaus:

https://www.facebook.com/pg/prayersforruth/photos/?ref=page_internal