



Sue Henning

February 21, 1942 - December 29, 2025

Sue Henning of Worthington, Ma. died unexpectedly at her home on December 29, 2025. Recently, Sue had been valiantly engaging with recurring health issues which intensified in the past month. She was the widow of Peter Foley, who passed away in May of 2024.

Sue and Peter relocated from Nantucket to Worthington in 2005. Peter, a loyal alumnus of the University of Massachusetts (Amherst), fondly recalled the Berkshires from his college days. The area became their new home after Little Compton R.I. was eliminated in a “run-off” competition Peter created to determine the location of their new home. After Peter passed away, Sue would often say that their shared love of Hampshire County, its rural character and bucolic nature, made the selection of Glendale Falls in Middlefield, Mass. the final and logical resting place for Peter’s remains in 2024. His send-off was capably administered by Sue who, while on her own one summer day, leaned over the perilous waterfalls and released him, as they agreed. She would warmly recall this among close friends.

Sue was born February 21, 1942, in Selma, Alabama, and was the daughter of Joseph and Eleanor Henning. Her father, a member of the US Air Force Reserve, was a proud son of Kentucky. After finishing his tour in the US Army Air Corps, the family re-located to Cleveland, Ohio where his employment prospects were greater. The Hennings settled on the west side of the city where Sue attended public schools. After high school, Sue enrolled at Ohio

State University, (Athens) where she received her bachelor's degree in 1963. Before continuing her education at The University of California where she received a master's degree in education, Sue and a close friend and classmate headed for Nantucket in their recently purchased used VW Beetle. Starting on the low rungs of the Nantucket employment ladder as a nineteen-year-old, Sue worked at the Harbor House Hotel as a chambermaid. Her energy, Southern roots and her comfort level with anyone from the "Bluegrass State", promptly resulted in job offers for both girls from "Willy" House and his wife, the Kentucky-born African American proprietors of what has now become a Nantucket institution known as "The Chicken Box ". Once a fishing shack, it served moderately priced honey-fried chicken to the numerous servants and chauffeurs who were given Thursdays and "half-Sundays" off by the "cottagers" who brought their staff to the island each Summer. From the sixties on, the popularity of the Chicken Box grew exponentially; largely as a result of its down-home ambience; good food and its friendly staff, including Sue.

She would often humorously recall that The Chicken Box was the starting gate for her life on the island. A few years later, it took another island resident to point out to her that if she really wanted to pursue a full-time career in teaching either on or "off-island", working in a local juke joint where the parents of her pupils might gather, was not going to be viewed as career-enhancing.

Now fortified with a master's degree from Berkeley, Sue went to work as an educator at The Papago (now Tohono O'odham) Indian Reservation in Sells, Arizona, in a remote part of the state. Sue's gifts as an artist and educator were recognized and her close bonds with the children, (and her infectious activism) resulted in the exposure and subsequent dismissal of a number of administrators who had been tolerating and shielding abusers of the Native American population there.

After returning to Nantucket, she became a highly regarded elementary school teacher where her artistic ability and her easy and warm rapport with her

pupils were recognized. In addition to teaching full-time, Sue was elected as President of the Nantucket Teacher's Association from 1985-1986 where she represented her fellow teachers in contract negotiations; salary and benefit matters, and staffing and working condition requirements.

A fellow teacher of Biology at Nantucket High School named Peter Foley, the gentleman that had informally been her career advisor, requested her hand in marriage, to which she assented. Their marriage in November 1978, marked the beginning of a joyous union for both blessed with humor, love and mutual respect. As a couple they visited several continents and countries including Australia, Czechoslovakia, South America, Tibet and Russia. Together, they avidly pursued, understood and appreciated the cultures of each of these nations. One trip to Ireland, recalled with true joy, involved Sue and Peter hosting two women, both members of the Sisters of Mercy (one of whom was Peter's sister) for the 125th anniversary of the religious order founded there in 1831.

Sue had numerous friends locally and on Nantucket. She cherished all of them but none of them were held with the same high regard she had for their pets or their children. As the owner of a few King Charles Cavalier Spaniels, she showered animals of all kinds with love, kibble, bones, bird seed, toys and affection. Sue believed that the children of her numerous friends and relatives deserved higher regard than they did and she demonstrated her generosity with gifts that transformed young children. Her homemade Valentine's Day cards, reflecting her artistic abilities were sent every year to numerous recipients along with books, calendars and miscellaneous gifts from her inveterate weekly harvest of local thrift shops.

Sue was always a true humanist. She engaged with others with warmth and authenticity. She suspended judgment and offered acceptance; she declined indifference and extended friendship; she deferred the average and chose to elevate all of whom she encountered.

If so inclined, please make donations in her memory to your local animal shelter or:

The American Indian College Fund
8333 Greenwood Boulevard
Denver, Colorado 80221

Tribute Wall

GG

“ I worked with Sue for many years at NES. She was a lovely human and great teacher and colleague. My mother and I were recipients of her Valentine’s Day cards for years-which we both treasured. I will miss her very much and cherish my meany memories of her. RIP Ms Henning❤️❤️❤️

Galen Gardner - February 05 at 12:55 PM

GG

Many! Not meany!

Galen Gardner - February 05 at 12:56 PM

SK

“ I remember Sue as an engaging human being, a wonderful teacher for 2 of my 3 children, and a friend to my Dad and myself, among many other islanders.

Suzanne M Keating - January 31 at 04:09 PM

LG

“ Sue, you sound like a wonderful woman. We both had teaching careers and my 32 years of teaching were my best years. Linda Henning Geise, daughter of Hubert Lee Henning.

Linda Henning Geise - January 30 at 03:45 PM

ER

“ I am deeply saddened to hear of this. Dare I say Sue was my favorite customer. I enjoyed her stories of Nantucket, her father, the nuns, the old ways, and so many more. Between butterfly stickers & Valentines she always made me feel special. I loved this lady so much... Every time we parted ways we exchanged these words; so until we meet again “Keep her East”.



Ellie Richardson - January 10 at 09:55 PM

SU

Oh how I loved Sue Henning!!!
One of the most special people in my heart....
Every year she would remind me to watch the Westminster Dog show!!
We would laugh about the silly dog hairdos and the oh so serious handlers.....
And I would receive her hand made wonderful cards.....
I will miss her terribly....
Till we meet again Miss Sue❤️

sue - January 21 at 01:29 PM