



Honorable Rosemary Shaw Sackett

January 17, 1940 - September 2, 2022

Honorable Judge Rosemary Shaw Sackett was born on January 17, 1940, to Frank William Shaw and Irene Catherine Shaw (ne Rafferty) in Fort Dodge, Iowa. She was raised in Pocahontas and called Iowa home for the rest of her life.

An exceptional student, she graduated from Pocahontas high school in three years and continued her education at Buena Vista College, where she graduated cum laude in three years while being a National Collegiate Debater. At the age of 19, as the only woman in her class, Rosemary entered law school at Drake University. She was the only woman to take and pass the Iowa Bar Exam in 1963. At the age of 22 she started her law career in the Shaw Law Office in Pocahontas with her father, Frank Shaw, becoming the fourth generation of Shaws to practice as an Iowa attorney.

During the Young Republicans State Convention in 1958, Rosemary met Robert W. "Bill" Sackett, the delegate from Spencer, Iowa. She would become acquainted with Bill again in 1964 when the West Law Book salesman set them up on a date. It was a successful match, and they married the same year. She joined Bill and his father Wilbur Sackett as an attorney in Spencer. She stopped practicing after their son Murphy was born, until her dear friend, Maxine Bussy, offered to care for Murphy and eventually all of their children, allowing Rosemary to return to work. She practiced law for twenty years in Northwest Iowa, and for 19 of those years, she was the only woman attorney in Spencer. She served as County Attorney, in Bar Association Leadership,

and as a State of Iowa appointee on multiple commissions.

In 1983, at the age of 43, she was appointed by Governor Terry Brandstad to the Iowa Court of Appeals. In 1999 she was elected by her peers as Chief Judge of the court, a position that she held until mandatory retirement at age 72. She remained with the court for 5 additional years as a Senior Judge. She authored more than 2,400 majority opinions with many dissents and concurrences. Serving for over 28 years, she is the longest serving judge in the history of the Iowa Court of Appeals.

As the chief judge, she led the court by example, as a prolific writer and hard worker. She was known as a staunch advocate for parental rights in an effort to keep families together. In one opinion she wrote “A few hours of cleaning service would have cost the state less than the ... fees spent to litigate the adequacy of this woman’s housekeeping skills through the state’s appellate courts. And, most importantly, the child would not have suffered the trauma of removal and the insecurities that come in foster care. Houses can be cleaned, but the trauma a child experiences when he or she is removed from the only parental home he or she has ever known can cause emotional scars that can last a lifetime.” Rosemary was not afraid to share her opinion or address societal issues and was often quoted in the press. In 1986 she spoke out about the need for more women and minorities in the Iowa judiciary. While her speaking out may have hurt her chances for advancement, the number of female judges appointed in Iowa increased dramatically. “Mrs. Sackett recalls getting letters from prospective employers saying they did not hire women. That was during the days when it wasn’t illegal to do so, and few people thought such a policy was wrong. Despite these experiences, she does not consider herself a leader of the women’s movement. ‘I feel that if you want to work hard to do a job, whether you’re a man or a woman makes no difference. If you are doing the right things, you will eventually be accepted. I’ve always felt I could do more for women by helping to create a good image for them and in helping recognize their potential.’” (Record Democrat, August 18, 1983) In 1990 she earned a Master of Law from the University of Virginia. Her

dissertation defended the parental rights of the disabled. In 2006, she received an Honorary Doctorate in Public Service from Buena Vista College. A collection of Judge Sackett's papers are housed at the Iowa Women's Archives at the University of Iowa Library.

In addition to her work on the bench, she visited the Country of Bahrain's Ministry of Justice to advise them on ways to improve their appellate system and make it more equitable. Her passion for the legal system led her to judicial conferences around the country expanding her knowledge and leading national judicial organizations. She was the first woman president of the Council of Chief Judges of State Courts of Appeal and is a past chair of the Appellate Judges Conference of the American Bar Association. She always said yes to an opportunity to further her education, collaborate with colleagues, share her wisdom, and support her community. She was a long-time member of Great Lakes Rotary, St. Mary's Catholic Church, Okoboji Yacht Club and Okoboji Protective Association. She coached middle school and high school Mock Trial and Debate teams. She mentored and encouraged young people, in particular women and girls, to seek professional careers. She and Bill had five children who were the source of incredible pride (and a few gray hairs). They raised their children on the shores of Okoboji- sailing, swimming, and spending time with friends. She wrote children's books, novels, and poems, many set in Okoboji. Rosemary and Bill attended all of their children's activities and loved spending time with their ten grandchildren. In a 1997 Des Moines Register article she was quoted as saying, "Young minds need to be nurtured. Young minds need environments where they're allowed to think for themselves, to clear their own path, to be guided, not directed. Most importantly they need to be respected." Okoboji was that place for the Sackett family. She instilled in her children the value of hard work, something she spoke of frequently and showed them every day. She led by example and showed you don't have to speak the loudest or use the most words to be heard. Her sense of humor was sharp and used to make a point

or lighten a situation. While Rosemary resided in Iowa her entire life, a thirst for new experiences led to trips and study programs around the world.

The world lost a great mind and a great leader on September 2nd, 2022, when Rosemary passed with her family by her side. A graveside service will take place at 11:30 am on Saturday, September 24th at St. Margaret's Cemetery, 13971 240th Ave, Spirit Lake, IA 51360. Following the service, a reception and luncheon will be held at The Roof Garden in Arnolds Park, 91 Lake St, Arnolds Park, IA 51331 from 1:00 pm until 4:00pm. Arrangements through Schuchert-Lentz Funeral Home in Spirit Lake. Online condolences may be left at www.spiritlakefuneralhome.com

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be sent to the Okoboji Protection Association, https://www.okobojiprotectiveassociation.org/rosemary_sackett or the mentorship program of your choosing.

Rosemary was preceded in death by her husband Robert "Bill" Sackett who passed on November 6, 2015, after they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. She is survived by her younger brother and fellow attorney William (Debra) Shaw of Beverly Hills, CA and his two daughters Catherine and Genevieve, both attorneys. Rosemary and Bill have five children: Murphy (Leslie) Sackett, a Boat Captain of San Diego, CA; Morgan (Lara) Sackett, a TV and Film Producer of Los Angeles, CA; Barry (JoAnne) Sackett, a partner in Goosmann Law Firm of Sioux Falls SD and Okoboji, IA; Frank (Kris) Sackett, a TV and Film Producer of Santa Monica, CA; and Mary (Shawn Hartje) Sackett, attorney and newly elected Marin County Supervisor of San Rafael, CA. She is also survived by her beloved Grandchildren: Maggie (Murphy); Sam and Sophie (Morgan); Tahoe, Venice and Kwanele (Barry); Luna and Sadie (Frank); and Albert and Sara (Mary). The family thanks those close friends who provided Rosemary with care and companionship, friendship, grace and compassion in her final years: Jan Myers, Annie Hartje and Sherri Akers.

Cemetery Details

St. Margaret's Cemetery

Spirit Lake, IA 51360

Previous Events

Graveside Service

SEP 24. 11:30 AM (CT)

St. Margaret's Cemetery
Spirit Lake, IA 51360

Reception

SEP 24. 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM (CT)

The Roof Garden
91 Lake Street
Arnolds Park, IA 51331

Tribute Wall



“ Jeana, Joel, Andy and Mandi purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Honorable Rosemary Shaw Sackett.



Jeana, Joel, Andy and Mandi - September 23, 2022 at 12:03 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Honorable Rosemary Shaw Sackett.



September 20, 2022 at 09:39 PM



“ What an incredible lady !!!!
May she rest in peace!

Rhonda Olson - September 20, 2022 at 10:10 AM



“ Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Honorable Rosemary Shaw Sackett.



September 19, 2022 at 05:51 PM

KH

“ I am the daughter of Gretchen G. Hayes JD. My mother and Rosemary went to Drake Law School together-where they met- and were friends for years. I remember Rosemary at our house and my mom talked about her often. My mom passed in 2013-a month short of 90th birthday.WE are so very sorry for your loss.PLease know that my mother respected her a great deal .Karen G. Hayes-Siever.

Karen G. Hayes-Siever - September 19, 2022 at 05:44 PM

PM

“ To the Family of Rosemary, I served with Rosemary on committees of St. Mary Parish of Spirit Lake, IA. I was also a member of Rotary Club of the Iowa Great Lakes, and was so excited when there would be an empty seat at the table she was already sitting and sharing. Your mother, grandmother, was one of the most intelligent, direct, compassionate and kind woman I had the opportunity to know. God Bless Rosemary and Family.

Pat McGill - September 18, 2022 at 07:32 PM



“ Magnificent Life Spray was purchased for the family of Honorable Rosemary Shaw Sackett.



September 15, 2022 at 06:22 PM

KG

“ My condolences to the Sackett family. I'm so sorry for your loss.

Kate (Chapman) Galloway - September 14, 2022 at 08:11 PM

AN

“ *What an amazing life. Rosemary was always such a kind and caring person.*

I knew her from being a fellow Rotary member. Prayers to her family and friends.

Alex Nebel

Carroll, IA

Alex Nebel - September 13, 2022 at 10:24 PM

JP

“ *Dear Sackett Family, I am sorry for the loss of your matriarch. What a gem! I began working for your mother at the Sackett, Sackett, Hemphill & Howe Law Firm in Spencer as my first legal assistant position in 1977. Your mom's sense of humor and kindness got me through a lot of work days. We shared our love of Frank Hasting's letters to the editor. She understood the stress of being a working mom. She encouraged me to further my legal education and obtain a paralegal degree. I drove to Estherville to Iowa Lakes Community College after work, taking a night class two evenings a week for four years. I admired her when she was appointed to the Iowa Appellate Court and left the firm. We stayed in touch on and off over the years after I moved away from Spencer. What a legacy she has left. She will always be remembered. ~ Julie (Lorenz-Mouw) Petersen*

Julia Petersen - September 13, 2022 at 06:04 PM

CT

“ To The Sackett Family: Your Mother was such a special person to our family over the years. Her encouragements were so appreciated and amazing advice. Our hearts go out to you at this time. May you find comfort in the memories of your happier times shared as a family and how she brightened your lives. Our love and prayers are with you all. God Bless.

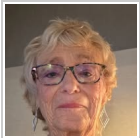


Chuck and Donna (Christensen) Tielbur - September 10, 2022 at 02:09 PM

RO

“ What an extraordinary person. Her encouragement was genuine and much appreciated. May God's peace rest on her family.
Rosalise Olson

Rosalise Olson - September 09, 2022 at 10:24 PM



“ What an awesome women.

Sally Martens - September 09, 2022 at 04:54 PM

RL

“ To all the Sackett family, I am so sorry for your loss.
Roxie Lueders

Roxie Lueders - September 09, 2022 at 10:03 AM

BS

“ Rosemary was certainly a special person. We always enjoyed visiting with her and her family. She definitely was an amazing woman. He loved the fact that she was a Shaw, and hoped we were related. God only takes the best, and she certainly did her very best. A servant of God and a servant to the people . May God bless her and reward her forever. Sincerely Bob and Kate Shaw

Bob and Kate Shaw - September 08, 2022 at 04:19 PM

SD

“ To the Sackett family, I am sorry for your loss. Rosemary was truly amazing. My first job out of school was with Sackett, Sackett, Hemphill & Howe. I interviewed at the Sackett's home. Rosemary and I shared the same birthday. Mary brought me bread and water. So cute. Rosemary was the best. When I started working at the office Rosemary told me that there was no mistake too big that could not be fixed. I have remembered that to this day. She will be missed. Hugs and prayers to all the Sackett family.

Sally C. DeLoss - September 08, 2022 at 08:38 AM

PR

“ Rosemary was definitely a woman. of character. Her. children must. be so proud of her and their dad. May she rest in peace. So sorry for your loss, Sackett. children.

Peggy Rick - September 07, 2022 at 10:05 PM

BE

“ Bob And Mary Emgarten lit a candle in memory of Honorable Rosemary Shaw Sackett



Bob and Mary Emgarten - September 07, 2022 at 09:42 PM

LN

“ *She was a pioneer who paved the way for so many of us. I was a senior in High School in Estherville, Iowa when she was appointed to the Court of Appeals. Trailblazer! Sympathy to her family. She will never be forgotten.*

Linnea Nicol - September 07, 2022 at 04:36 PM

GB

“ *Greg & Dee Baloun lit a candle in memory of Honorable Rosemary Shaw Sackett*



Greg & Dee Baloun - September 07, 2022 at 12:56 PM

KP

“ *Kathy Perkins lit a candle in memory of Honorable Rosemary Shaw Sackett*



Kathy Perkins - September 07, 2022 at 10:31 AM