

Lois “Suzi” Davis

Memorial

January 4, 1923 - January 29, 2018

Lois Mabel Smith was born on January 4, 1923 in Minneapolis, Minnesota to Blanche and Walter Smith. Her father was a dentist, and during the Great Depression would often accept payment from patients in the form of venison, or homegrown vegetables. As a result, the family was fortunate to never truly be “without” during this severe economic time. Lois graduated from the University of Minnesota in 1944 with a degree in child psychology. She left home to teach nursery school in Oak Ridge, Tennessee and then, following in the footsteps of a friend, moved to Baltimore, Maryland. She was very proud to have taught the twin sons of American author/journalist Eric Sevareid.

However, the allure of New York City soon beckoned to Lois, and it was there she met Frederic L. Davis. Just a few months later, Lois and Fred married in April of 1947. She worked as a ground hostess for American Overseas Airlines, as well as for Wiley Publishing before she and Fred welcomed the first of three children. It was Fred who called Lois “Suzibelle,” which turned into “Suzi.” Years later, Fred confided that he wished he had kept his pet name private, but nonetheless, Lois became “Suzi” to the world. Over the years Fred and Suzi moved with their family to Denver and San Diego before settling in Indianapolis in 1962. They joined First Friends, where they became lifelong members.

Never one to sit still, Suzi loved to garden. She also knitted, sewed, and quilted. She loved to have what she referred to as “a hand project.” Eventually, Fred brought home a small hand loom for her and before long weaving became a passion. She even spun her own yarn on a spinning wheel that belonged to Fred’s mother. In 1988, she traveled alone to New Zealand because she wanted to go to a sheep farm to see the source of the wool she was weaving.

Suzi belonged to an Indianapolis weaving group (Indy Weavers) and a fellow weaver volunteered at the Indianapolis Women’s Prison, teaching the prisoners how to weave. She invited Suzi to go with her, which began Suzi’s years-long devotion to the women at the prison. Suzi always spoke highly of the women, referring to them as “the girls.” She never talked with them about what they had done—she didn’t want to know. She was steadfast in that it didn’t matter to her—in fact, she would proudly have had any one of them in her home (although it was against the rules to do so).

After Suzi and Fred cared for his mother through a grueling 2-year battle with Alzheimer's, they both became ardent supporters of the Hemlock Society. Suzi felt very strongly that everyone has a right to a dignified, compassionate death.

Suzi loved to host spur-of-the-moment dinner parties, had a smile that lit up every room, and she never met a stranger.

Submitted by Julia Opferman