



## Roberta Ahnemiller

May 16, 1938 - November 19, 2023

Roberta Anne Bowen Ahnemiller was born on May 16, 1938, and died on November 20, 2023, at the age of 85. She was born to Mabel Mae Witte Bowen and Henry “Hank” Joseph Bowen. The family spent her early years in Coulee City as Hank worked as a laborer on the construction of Grand Coulee Dam. When she was four years old the family permanently settled in East Wenatchee. Roberta attended East Wenatchee schools through the 8th grade, and graduated from Wenatchee High School in 1956. Hers was one of the last classes of East Wenatchee students to attend Wenatchee before the construction of Eastmont High School.

Roberta enjoyed school very much. She participated in extracurriculars such as Science Club. She recollected being referred to as a “bridge walker”. This was a derogatory term kids in the valley used towards kids who lived in East Wenatchee. It implied an opinion that, by virtue of where their homes were located, they were of lower social class. It originated from the fact that, in the early years, most East Wenatchee kids did indeed walk over the Columbia River Bridge (now known as the Pedestrian Bridge) to attend school. By Roberta’s time, in the early 1950’s, kids took a school bus.

Roberta found joy in living next door to her grandmother Maude Johnson Witte, riding bikes and playing with her neighborhood friends, spending time with her childhood dog Missy, and attending camp Zanika Lache on the south shore of Lake Wenatchee. Early on in her childhood she discovered her passion for reading. She was rarely without a book in her possession, and

grabbed any opportunity she found (even during short trips to local restaurants and shops) to get a chapter in. Her favorite book was “The Color Purple” by Alice Walker. She read all genres, but she was a sucker for a good murder mystery. Her family liked to tease her about her selections. She could discuss Tolstoy with ease of intellect, while simultaneously devouring a series about a detective whose cat solves murders on its owners behalf.

She grew up attending the Wenatchee Methodist Church. She was married in the Wenatchee First United Methodist Church. Involvement in church activities was a lifelong priority for her. She participated in study groups, supported social justice projects, and taught Sunday School. Roberta’s faith was enduringly steadfast, kept close to her heart, and a bedrock from which she drew comfort and strength throughout her life. Her personal relationship with God was inspirational to her daughter.

Roberta met John Henry Ahnemiller, in a study group at the Wenatchee Public Library, while they both attended Wenatchee Junior College. Years later when their daughter asked to hear the story of how they fell in love (and she did so many times, as this was one of her favorite family stories) Roberta proudly recounted that she decided rather quickly after meeting John that she would marry him. With a chuckle and a smile she assuredly recounted that her lack of experience in the dating department did not deter her from pursuing him despite her perception that she was not the only person doing so. She fell in love quickly and decisively, so when he chose to transfer to Central Washington University to complete his bachelors degree she followed suit. Shortly thereafter they began dating exclusively.

Following in her mother’s footsteps Roberta earned a degree in Education with minors in English and History. One month after her graduation in 1960 she and John were married on an extremely hot July 23rd. For a graduation gift her parents offered her the choice between a trip to Hawaii or a store bought wedding dress. She chose the latter and was thrilled to take the train to Chicago to purchase her dress from a fancy downtown boutique.

John and Roberta enjoyed golfing at the Wenatchee Golf and Country Club,

camping, and traveling in the summers. Seventeen years into their marriage they were surprised and delighted to become parents to their only child Paige Ann.

Roberta spent 45 years teaching third and fourth-grade students. The majority of her career was spent at Grant Elementary School in East Wenatchee where she formed close and lasting friendships with her colleagues. She loved her chosen profession and when she retired in 2005 The Wenatchee World did a feature on her as, at the time, she was the longest-serving employee of the Eastmont School District. After retirement, she traveled internationally with friends, played Mah Jong at the Wenatchee Golf and Country Club, enjoyed attending theater, and read and read.

She was besotted with dogs and cats, but John preferred to live with cats. She helped some who were lost find their way home and provided an interim home to many strays and litters of kittens. From her thirties to her eighties five cats lived out their long lives with her: Samantha, Norman, Cat, Guinevere, and Jessie. Their companionship meant a great deal.

Roberta and John were married 51 years before his death on November 2, 2011. Through her grief, Roberta continued with activities she enjoyed. During the last 10 years of her life, she suffered from Dementia which slowly and cruelly took her hobbies, memories, and independence. Worst of all her disease process made her tangled and beautiful intrinsic nature inaccessible to her loved ones. It is a comfort to know that throughout this time her disposition remained upbeat and generally good-natured. She enjoyed the activities afforded her and creating new friendships during her time in care facilities.

Roberta is survived by her daughter Paige Ahnemiller, son-in-law Nathan Woodward, and grandson Henry Woodward whose birth (like his mother's before him) joyfully surprised her. She was thrilled to assume the title of 'Grandma Roberta', and for the seven years they shared time on this earth he was the light of her life.

We would like to extend our deep appreciation for the exceptional care provided by Central Washington Hospice specifically her care team of nursing (Jackie and Chealsa) and chaplain (Jaime) services. In addition we wish to thank Caitlyn, Anna, and Mariana. The care they provided for Roberta was dignified, principled, and comforting.

A Celebration of Life service will be held on Saturday, January 6th, 2024 at 2:00 at the Wenatchee United Methodist Church with reception following. Arrangements by Chapel of the Valley, East Wenatchee.

# Previous Events

## Celebration of Life

JAN 6. 2:00 PM (PT)

First United Methodist Church  
941 Washington St,  
Wenatchee, WA 98801

# Tribute Wall

RF

“ *My husband went to school with Roberta. Graduated 1958. She and her husband John were great friends with us for many years. My condolences to her family*

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**Ruth Kenaston Fisher** - November 25, 2023 at 10:21 PM

CW

*I am unable to attend the service but want to share that Roberta was a good neighbor and I enjoyed playing golf with her and some traveling with her*

*May she rest in peace*

*Claudia Weitz*

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**Claudia Weitz** - January 02, 2024 at 04:10 PM