



Kay Marie Sagmiller

June 27, 1957 - February 27, 2020

A good teacher is like a candle – it consumes itself to light the way for others.
– Mustafa Kemal Atatürk

Kay Marie Sagmiller was first and foremost an educator. Her passion for teaching was ubiquitous to her being, contributing to her sense of playfulness and zest for life. Everyone that Kay interacted with received the gift of her knowledge, kindness, sweet spirit, and love. She transformed the lives of those who knew her through her encouragement, creativity, and conviction in their ability to overcome adversity. She lived her life with meaning and a mindfulness that few of us are able to achieve. Kay cared deeply about those around her and the difficult problems our world faces today. She was a warrior for equity, a relentless champion for the underdog, and a devoted friend to all including her beloved pets. She especially loved children and they were drawn to her like moths to a flame, for they innately knew that she was fun, smart, and trustworthy.

Kay loved Montana and was often pulled back to the beautiful mountains and serene Flathead Lake area that she called “home”. She traveled widely and made many life-long friends through her travels. Kay was well-known for her spirit of fun and playfulness that was an integral part of her daily life. Her annual “sparkle party” was held to celebrate with friends, the lengthening of the days and the promise of spring in the darkness of winter. She was a gifted

writer and talented orator with a knack for speaking to the heart and inspiring listening audiences. Kay was a consummate storyteller and had the gift of bringing a special life to the story that enthralled both child and adult alike. Less well known was her incredible artistic talent in print and textile arts. Kay had an almost compulsive need to create and beautify everything around her and to engage those close to her in the splendor of life. She continued to care for and empower those around her even in her passing. It is with great sorrow that we say goodbye to this old soul and wish her well on the next leg of her journey for surely, she has much work yet to be done.

Kay Marie Sagmiller was born in Missoula Montana on June 27, 1957 to Kenneth and Eloise Sagmiller. She attended Ronan High School where she excelled in speech and drama. She received her BA in Elementary Education from the University of Montana in 1981. Kay completed her master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction and graduated from the Danforth Principal Preparation Program in 1993 at the University of Washington in Seattle. She received her Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Washington in 1998. She was the Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning at Oregon State University until retiring in 2018. She was a member of the Corvallis United Methodist Church and held a special bond with the Soul Sisters book group.

Kay is preceded in death by her parents Ken and Eloise Sagmiller of Ronan Montana; uncles Norman, Del, and Jerry Sagmiller, and Jack Sprankling; aunts Lucille Buchmann, June Sorenson; and brother-in-law George Rocky Day. She is survived by brothers James and David (Tamara) Sagmiller, sister Shelley Mills, uncle Herb Sorenson, aunt Miriam Sprankling, stepsons Cameron and Quentin Decker; numerous cousins, nieces and nephews, and a beautiful lifetime full of friends.

The family would like to express special thanks to her community of friends

who have been strong supporters of Kay and her family. No funeral services are planned per her request, however, a memorial service on the Oregon Coast is being arranged for this summer, to celebrate Kay's life as she would have wanted – with friends, pets, love, laughter, stories, and wine. Donations in lieu of flowers or to honor Kay are asked to be sent to Samaritan Evergreen Hospice, Corvallis First United Methodist Church, or any pet adoption program.

You may leave thoughts and memories for the family at www.mchenryfuneralhome.com

Tribute Wall

JM

“ I met Kay in junior high in Ronan, MT
We clicked and performed dramatic pieces together competing across the state. We acted in plays. We sang in musical groups and performed together. She was effervescent. She had a real sense of comedic timing. She had a sparkle in her eyes. She was very creative. She was intelligent. We laughed and poked fun at people. We went to prom together. We went skiing together. I left Montana after graduating from Ronan High and fell out of touch, sadly. But she was a pistol. An Annie Oakley. A serious educator. Rest in peace dear Kay.

John Chase Maxwell - May 08, 2021 at 05:31 PM

EP

“ Dec 12, 2020

I just stumbled on this tribute, as I was curious about Kay's Facebook post. I met Kay before either of us entered the first grade. Both of our families were bedrock people in Ronan, Montana. When the Sagmiller family moved to Bismarck ND at about middle school, I was able to visit her for maybe a week. At that time, commercial flights were pretty rare, but I flew commercially from Missoula to Bismarck and stayed with her family. My family was attending some type of telephone conference on the East Coast, so my family picked me up in a private plane (5 people in a 4 place airplane) and I went on to a summer vacation with my family on the Eastern Seaboard. That kind of travel was rare back then. Kay and I went to the University of Montana together right out of High School. Before Kay moved back to Ronan, and after that, went to graduate school, I visited her in Olympia, WA. She worked as a teacher there, and I believe bought her first house.

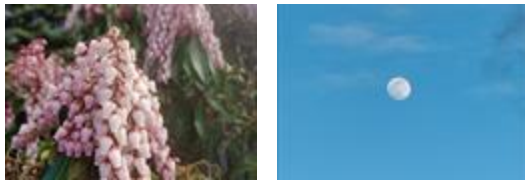
She was a wonderful friend, an inspiration (and she still is an inspiration), and I really miss her.

Beth Preston, Oakland, CA

Elizabeth Preston - December 12, 2020 at 05:28 PM

JM

“ I met Kay nearly three years ago, walking my dog at Crystal Lake park. I remember these piercing blue eyes looking out at me from behind a tree and knew I'd found a soul sister. We met up in cafes, restaurants, the park, Salem and Corvallis and never stopped talking. There was no subject that Kay was uninterested in, such a lively mind. She was also one of the most caring people I've ever met. She talked about transforming into the artist she always wanted to be and I pray that next time around she does just that. Deeply missed dear soul.



Jade Rosina McCutcheon - March 20, 2020 at 10:15 PM

JG

“ I didn't know Kay well, but when I went to her at CTL, she was always supportive and upbeat and had good ideas. I really appreciated her presence and her passion for teaching.
Joan Gross

Joan Gross - March 09, 2020 at 12:58 PM

AF

“ *Ann Fleming lit a candle in memory of Kay Marie Sagmiller*



Ann Fleming - March 08, 2020 at 01:33 PM

JD

“ In my head, I can still hear Kay’s voice on the phone saying, “Judy, you have to play, or you going to become a boring person!” It was the Fall of 1991. I had just met Kay in my first doctoral class, the Philosophy of Education, of at the University of Washington... wearing purple, of course. We were paired up to share “the quote that most motivates us in life.” And, from that point through the next 28.5 years, we have been playing and laughing together...and supporting each other through life’s mishaps.

Our dyad quickly evolved into a small group of northwest women whom we called “The Divas.” At least once a year we gathered somewhere in the Northwest to laugh, talk smart, drink wine, have new experiences, and solve the problems of education...(which we did but no one listened)! We planned ordinary events, and some outrageous events, i.e., Stewart Island’s slumber party and catching fresh crab, Lake Powell and learning how to anchor (and drive) a houseboat, a Glitter Dance where we wore our newest purchases from the Goodwill glitter sale, the White Trash party, the Come-as-Your Favorite Historical Female Figure potluck where we brought a dish characterizing the historical female we dressed like...to more mundane events like skiing together, visiting San Diego’s “finest” restaurants, haunting different “Goodwill store all over the west coast, flying kites and walking the Lincoln Beach---always laughing! I spent Christmas, 1992, with Kay and her whole family in Montana and got to meet the people she held nearest and dearest---and see the Montana that Kay loved. I treasure that memory. My heart goes out to her family... and I pray you are experiencing a gentle, enveloping healing.

Kay was my playmate, my confidante, my dear friend who brought so much joy and laughter into my life. She was truly the most articulate person I have ever met...she was just brilliant! I feel so fortunate that Kay and I walked on this planet at the same time during this life’s journey. Before she got sick, she was going to send me lesson plans to help me develop my drawing abilities...I will truly miss you, Kay, and send you love and wishes for much playfulness

on this next leg of our soul's journey.

*Judy Deiro,
Edmonds, WA*

Judy Deiro - March 07, 2020 at 09:11 AM

JP

“*Kay's exuberance and enthusiasm for speech and drama were wonderfully contagious. I enjoyed the privilege of teaching and coaching the speech and drama class and teams at Ronan High School in Ronan, Montana. Kay's energy was transmitted to her fellow students and resulted in performances for neighboring schools and very successful state meets. I'm sad to hear of Kay's untimely death; it truly is a loss for her students and friends. Rest in peace, Kay; you are in my prayers.*



*Juli Parker
Sparks, Nevada*

Juli Parker - March 06, 2020 at 12:22 PM

BS

“*My dear friend Shelly; I remember sitting in your office and listening to you talk about your sister. How she started out and where she ended up at. I was so sorry to hear that she was sick and battling that terrible disease cancer. I'm so sorry to hear of her passing. My prayers are with you and your family.*
Love Barb Sugg

Barb Sugg - March 05, 2020 at 02:33 AM

SM

“ *Sad and surprised to hear Kay Sagmiller has passed away. I met her twice - in 'Tuesday Teaching Talks' -when I visited OSU in Corvallis. Kay was such an inspiring and sympathetic person and teacher. RIP. My condolences to her family and friends.*

Sirpa Multaharju - March 04, 2020 at 04:33 PM

LK

“ *Knowing Kay's sister Shelley and meeting her brother James is a perfect introduction to getting to know Kay. Their parents Ken & Eloise had to have been a wonderful, gentle couple to have left behind a legacy of thoughtfulness and love that shines so brightly from their children. The world is sad to have lost such a treasure, however, the world is a much better place because of Kay and her siblings. Shelly, James and David, my heart is sad along with yours, but I want to thank you for sharing with all of us the remarkable life of your sister Kay. Shelley, come home when you can to our open arms.*

Linda Kaveshan

Linda Kaveshan - March 04, 2020 at 11:12 AM

SY

“ I met Kay in 1992 when she was asked to give me, a new student in UW's Ph.D. program, a tour of the campus. Little did I know that this was the beginning of a 25 year friendship punctuated by laughter, silliness, fabulous meals, good wine, adventure, and unlimited, mutual support throughout our careers, relationships, and many moves. Ironically, in 2015, we came to live just two blocks from each other. I am forever grateful that we were able to share the last few years together. She was a creative, spiritual soul who gave much of herself to others. She saw the absurd in any situation, always turning despair to laughter. She had a gift for asking the just right question, sparking many in-depth, energetic discussions. Kay's passion and love of life affected many people during her short time in Corvallis. She will be missed.

Suzanne Yerian - March 04, 2020 at 10:53 AM

TA

“ Tony Aipperspach lit a candle in memory of Kay Marie Sagmiller



Tony Aipperspach - March 04, 2020 at 10:38 AM

TC

“ Terry Camel-Brown lit a candle in memory of Kay Marie Sagmiller



Terry Camel-Brown - March 04, 2020 at 08:54 AM

Noreen
Thomas

“ 1 file added to the album kay



Noreen Thomas - March 03, 2020 at 10:32 PM

DS

“ I have known the Sagmiller family for years and such quality humans they are. I was amazed in high school who ability and leadership qualities she exhibited. I lost track of her upon graduation, but just want to share that she's is gone way too soon and her families will be in our prayers! Bill and Dana Darlington

Dana Stipe - March 03, 2020 at 08:29 PM

MF

Auntie Kay-Kay, as my girls knew her when they were little. We are so sorry to hear of her passing, she will be greatly missed. May her journey continue in beauty.

Melissa Michel & family - March 04, 2020 at 08:49 PM

SF

“ I didn't know Kay, but knew of her struggle and brave battle with cancer. Who I do know is her sister Shelley, a work colleague but most of all my good friend. I see words used to describe Kay that I would use to describe Shelley, so I can't help but think that Kay was the same beautiful soul that her sister is. Prayers to you Shelley during this time of great loss. Until I can give you a real hug, I hope this virtual one will reach you and that you know many, many people are with you in the days ahead.

Sheila Friedrich - March 03, 2020 at 03:04 PM