



Ruth Aline Ketchum Burns

April 27, 1918 - February 8, 2026

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Ruth Aline Ketchum Burns died February 8, 2026 at the age of 107.

Ruth was born April 27, 1918, in Great Falls, Montana, the second child of Norma Grace (Robertson) and Charles Clayton Ketchum. At the time of her birth the family resided in Fairfield, Montana. Charles was a civil engineer employed by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation on the Sun River Irrigation project. Norma's parents, Byrd and Jessie (Vorus) Robertson were pioneer settlers in Sun River where Mr. Robertson owned and operated a general store. The family moved often during Ruth's early childhood, living in Montana and Idaho, then settling in Vale, Oregon where she completed elementary and high school. She attended the University of Oregon, majoring in business administration and graduating in 1939 with a BA degree. While attending the UO she was a member of Alpha Omicron Pi sorority, Phi Chi Theta, Beta Gamma Sigma as well as a Mortar Board honorary. Her activities included serving as president of her sorority, a member of the Associated Women students speakers committee, president of the YWCA and captain of the coed rifle team. In 1941, she earned an MBA at Northwestern University while employed by Carson Pirie Scott & Company. Here she was assistant training

director, later becoming assistant employment manager.

In April 1943 Ruth resigned her position at Carson's to serve with the American Red Cross hospital service during World War II. During the war she was stationed in Army and Navy hospitals in Sydney, Brisbane, Southport, and Townsville, Australia, and Hollandia, New Guinea. Following a brief time in Manila after the war ended, she was then assigned to an Army hospital in Kure, Japan, arriving there in November 1945. When she returned to the United States she was employed as Training Director by Henry C. Lytton & Co., Chicago. In 1947 she returned to Japan where she was employed as an historian for the US Army Historical Section, editing a history of WWII in the Southwest Pacific and later a history of the Occupation of Japan. Between the two assignments she took a six-month leave of absence, traveling by freighter from Yokohama to Bombay then up the Persian Gulf. She spent several months traveling in the Middle East and in Europe. After completion of the historical projects Ruth returned to the U.S. and to Washington D.C. where she was employed by the Central Intelligence Agency until her marriage to George W. Burns in August 1953. They lived in Pikeville, Kentucky, San Francisco, San Rafael, and Fresno, California.

Following a divorce, Ruth and her daughter, Diane, moved to Portland where she was employed by Evans Products Company. In 1965 they moved to Eugene. Ruth worked as a college student financial aid administrator and earned a PhD in Higher Education Administration in 1973. In 1978 she resigned from her position as associate director of financial aid and for five years worked for the Oregon State Scholarship Commission. She retired in 1983 but continued to be active in financial aid as a private consultant to colleges and universities in Oregon, California, Washington, and Idaho. She was active in professional financial aid organizations and in 1984 received a meritorious achievement award from the National Association of Student Financial Aid for her work in authoring an Encyclopedia of Student Financial

Aid still used as a reference by colleges and universities throughout the U.S.

Ruth moved to Corvallis in 1993. She was an active member of the P.E.O. Sisterhood, AAUW, the Assistance League of Corvallis, and the Episcopal Church of the Good Samaritan. Ruth enjoyed traveling, reading, writing, sewing, photography, cooking and loved parties.

She is survived by her daughter, Diane Fisher and her husband Glenn Fisher, granddaughters Kyla Humphreys and Kimberly Bronson (Wade), grandson Matt Fisher (Laci), niece Julie Prickett (Kayne), nephews Scott Westfall (Denise), John Proebstel, grandnieces Kelsey Price (Andy), Stefanie Westfall, grandnephew Nicholas Svoboda (Santara), 7 (almost 8) great-grandchildren and 7 great nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by granddaughter Katie Fisher Gray, sisters Barbara Proebstel., Donna Westfall, and brother Clyde Ketchum, infant daughter Carolyn Jessica, and infant twins Susan Elizabeth and Gordon Randolph.

A memorial service will be held at 2:00pm on Saturday June 13, 2026, at the Episcopal Church of the Good Samaritan in Corvallis. McHenry Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the P.E.O. Scholarship Foundation, the Episcopal Church of the Good Samaritan Foundation, CARE international or to a charity of choice.

Upcoming Events

Memorial Service

JUN 13. 2:00 PM (PT)

Episcopal Church of the Good Samaritan
333 NW 35th St.
Corvallis, OR 97330

Tribute Wall

ME

“ This obituary really does represent a life full of experiences, opportunities, challenges and changes. I learned more about Ruth in reading it. I also smiled while reading it, as I have fond memories of my first visit with her and hearing stories of some of these experiences.. We sat in her living room, drinking coffee, and talking like old friends even though we had only just met - as one of the relatives linked on a distant branch on her large family tree (that continued to grow). Through Ruth, I also had the privilege of sharing time with Diane and Glenn, both in Oregon and in Scotland. While celebrating Ruth's life, I reflect on the absence of her presence. I send my love and condolences to you. - Michelle

Michelle Elliot - April 17 at 12:13 PM

MB

“ Wow. What a wonderful lady! May God bless her with His unending love now and for eternity . My deepest sympathies. Mary Ann

Mary Ann Bowman - April 14 at 09:33 PM

SG

“ Diane: As you know, your Mother was a respected colleague and a wonderful friend. She was so proud of you; I am very grateful for the loving Daughter you have been and the special support you provided for the last chapter of her long life. skg

February 15, 2026

Susan K Gilmore - February 15 at 04:10 AM