



Lou Kassem

November 10, 1931 - August 14, 2020

Lou Kassem, at the age of 88, passed away at home on Friday, August 14. Lou was the daughter of Dorothy and R.E. Morrell of Elizabethton, TN. She was preceded in death by her parents, brother John Morrell and her daughter Dottie Kassem Riviere. Lou was surrounded by her husband Shakeep and daughters Cherrie and Lisa Kassem and Amy- Leigh Kubicki.

Lou attended East Tennessee State University. She married her high school sweetheart, Shakeep, in Blacksburg in the fall of 1951. They were married sixty-nine years!

Blacksburg was Lou's home for the past 69 years. Lou devoted her life to her family and loved Blacksburg and the mountains. She contributed much to education in Blacksburg as a storyteller, playwright, and member of the PTA. She served on the Blacksburg Town Council for six years, and was active in the Blacksburg United Methodist Church. She supported the Junior Women's Club and was instrumental in the development of the Blacksburg Park Playground. Lou worked at the Blacksburg Town Library for over eight years helping others emulate her love of books and the impact they can have on a life. At age 45, Lou realized her dream of becoming an author. Her purpose was to help young adults feel seen and heard and to know they were not alone in this quest called life. Lou published 12 young-adult books. Her books about teenage life and high school struggles focused on helping young adults find and believe in themselves, even if they didn't fit in or were different. She spoke at over 250 schools in VA and numerous universities across the

country. She helped other writers improve their writing and understand the publishing process.

Books were Lou's first love (next to her husband Shakey) but she also enjoyed playing golf all over the country, traveling to Ireland and Scotland, and hiking mountain trails. Some of her favorite local trails were the Huckleberry, Pandapas Pond, and Deerfield.

Countless lives have been touched by Lou's humor, caring nature, perspective-on-life, and encouragement to find and be themselves.

It is important to the family not only to celebrate Lou's life, but also to recognize their wonderful Burruss Drive neighbors and Blacksburg Rescue Squad.

Memorial service will be held Wednesday, August 19, 2020 at 2:00 pm in the McCoy Funeral Home Chapel 150 Country Club Drive in Blacksburg.

Visitation will be held at 1:30pm with service following at 2:00pm. In lieu of flowers, please make donations to the Blacksburg branch of the Montgomery County Library system. Arrangements by McCoy Funeral Home, Blacksburg.

Previous Events

Service

AUG **19**. 2:00 PM (ET)

McCoy Funeral Home Chapel
150 Country Club Dr S.W.
Blacksburg, VA 24060

Tribute Wall

ZM

“ Hello from San Antonio, Texas. I read *Middle School Blues* in the 6th grade back in 1994. It was the first book that captured my imagination and interest in reading. I’ve always remembered it through the years. Just recently I started my journey to track down the edition that I read in 1994. It’s sentimental to my journey has not only a reader but now a mom. I’m so sorry for your loss and I pray Your mom is at peace. She was such an inspiration to me and so many others.



Zainab Mohammed - June 29, 2025 at 10:51 PM

CB

“ I had the distinct pleasure, honor, and blessing of getting to meet and know Lou when she was gracious enough to come and speak to my seventh grade language arts classes several times. Not only was she a great author, she was a wonderfully warm, entertaining, and humorous speaker, and I looked forward to her visits, as did my students. We started every school year’s reading with *Middle School Blues*, and I never tired of reading and sharing that book with my students. Once during a luncheon with Lou after her presentation, she shared that *Listen for Rachel* was always her favorite. I rushed home and read it and counted it as my favorite too. Lou was something special, that’s for sure, and I am sure you all realize that. I’m so thankful to have known her; she was truly a blessing.
Please know you are all in my thoughts and prayers.

Chuck Benson - August 18, 2020 at 04:25 PM

DG

“What a legacy your Mom has created! She greatly impacted the lives of two classes of my 5th grade students with her books, her humor, her love for history and her creative expression of the written word. Her books *Middle School Blues* and *A Haunting in Williamsburg* were the catalysts for some amazing creative expression. Because of my love of history and reading, after I read the latter book, I contacted her by phone, and she graciously shared for over an hour about how she prepared and developed that book.. Taking her suggestion, I traveled to Williamsburg with my camera and her book, and photographed all of the places in that book, had them blown up into 8X10s, and used them to teach the facts and fiction of that wonderful book. We read and loved her creative expression and studied how she “wove” facts and fiction together so well that oftentimes you could not tell fact from fiction. The highlight of that study was the visit of a RLA---Real Live Author---Lou Kassem, for a full day workshop with my students. She read to them from her works, and led them through a writing experience that broadened their horizons and mine as well. These were highly motivated and highly intelligent students, and of the 22 in that particular class, four went on to major in English and five majored in history—all remarking of her great influence in their lives.

This is but one small example of her creative powers. I know you loved her for who she was, but so did we. Her love for history, the printed word, and children and life made her the special person she was.

I’m sure you have many wonderful memories, and I hope you will celebrate and keep those memories forever in your heart. I’m so glad I had the opportunity to meet and work with her. She enriched my life beyond belief. May God richly bless and comfort you as you mourn the passing of this beautiful person.

Sincerely, Diane Stout Grant

Diane Stout Grant - August 17, 2020 at 08:32 PM



“ *A sympathy card was purchased for the family of Lou Kassem.* ”



August 17, 2020 at 07:00 AM