



## Bonnie "Colleen" Putnam

July 29, 1936 - April 22, 2024

The Putnam family is celebrating the life of Bonnie "Colleen" Putnam, who passed away on Monday, April 22, 2024, in Albia, Iowa, at age 87.

Colleen was born on her family's Putnam County farm on July 29, 1936, to Randall and Edith Pickering. She married Robert Putnam on August 16, 1953, and he preceded her in death on July 23, 2003.

After graduating from Unionville High School in 1953, Colleen graduated from Wichita State University with a Bachelor of Science degree, later earning a Master of Science from Truman State University. Colleen was the first in her family to graduate college and became an advocate for women's rights and advanced education.

Her career began with a challenge as she started the first kindergarten in Putnam County, MO. Colleen amassed a 32-year long career teaching young children, which she loved. She received numerous awards, including Iowan of the Day at the Iowa State Fair, Teacher of the Year, Woman of the Year, and 5 Chamber awards, as well as an induction in the Chamber Hall of Fame and the Ruth Wagner Award in the capacity of an Assistant Commissioner for the Monroe County Soil & Water Conservation District.

It came naturally for Colleen to volunteer within her community and she

especially loved taking photos of other volunteers to submit to the local newspaper, highlighting their works for the community. She belonged to several organizations, such as the Monroe County Hospital Auxiliary, Monroe County Master Gardeners, Monroe County Arts Council, and the Monroe County Woman's Club, as well as served on the Carnegie-Evans Public Library Board of Directors.

Colleen enjoyed traveling around the world through Elderhostel programs, visiting over 60 foreign countries and all 50 US States. In her spare time, she enjoyed playing Mah-Jong with friends.

Colleen is survived by her son Michael and wife Jennifer, granddaughter Patrice and husband Alvin, grandson Max and wife Krissy, granddaughter-in-law Kim, great granddaughter Zoey, and nieces Rosalee, Deana, and Lisa and husband, Ed. She is also survived by countless friends and loved ones.

She was preceded in death by her husband Robert, grandson Evan, her parents, and brothers Donald and Homer Lee (and his wife, Rose).

A Celebration of Life visitation will be held from 8:30 AM–11:30 AM on Saturday, May 4, 2024, at the Tharp Funeral Home in Albia.

Funeral services will be held at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, May 4, 2024, at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Albia, with Dr. Jenna Harris and Pastor Lynda Carlson officiating. A private family burial will be held at a later date.

The family kindly requests no flowers, and suggests memorial contributions to St. Paul's Lutheran Church, King Opera House, or Lone Pine Cemetery, to honor her memory with her chosen charities.

# Cemetery Details

## Oak View Cemetery

Albia, IA 52531

# Previous Events

## Celebration of Life Visitation

MAY 4. 8:30 AM - 11:30 AM (CT)

Tharp Funeral Home  
116 Benton Ave.  
Albia, IA 52531  
(641) 932-3129  
<https://www.tharpfh.com/>

## Funeral Service

MAY 4. 1:00 PM (CT)

St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
N. 8th St.  
Albia, IA

# Tribute Wall

NG

“ Always enjoyed Colleen...she was such a great gal & quite a spitfire! Will miss her.

Nell Gates - May 03, 2024 at 07:07 PM

CF

“ Colleen was always very kind and generous. My sincere condolences.

Cody Flattery - April 30, 2024 at 04:46 PM

PF

“ Peter & Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Bonnie "Colleen" Putnam.

Peter & Family - April 29, 2024 at 12:36 PM

PF

“ Peter & Family purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Bonnie "Colleen" Putnam.



Peter & Family - April 29, 2024 at 12:36 PM

GH

“ She was fun and hard worker in our hospital volunteer department. I especially loved that she was a positive person.

Gale Herrera - April 27, 2024 at 07:25 PM

JM

“ Colleen was the very best of us. It is rare that a person grows to touch so many lives, and shape so many young minds into the people they would become. I do not know a single person who was not changed by her kindness, generosity, and determination to do the right thing simply because it is the right thing to do.

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**Justin Miller** - April 27, 2024 at 12:55 PM

LK

“ Colleen can only be described by me as my friend, shoulder to lean on, encourager and my rock. Her wisdom, love and caring was never ending. She shaped the lives of so many young people who have gone on to be successful men and women. It was my privilege to spend time with Colleen. She's now in her permanent home-in Heaven with Robert. We will see you again dear friend. Love you always. Lana and Rob Eells

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**Lana Kaldenberg** - April 26, 2024 at 12:20 PM

KL

“ Mrs Putman was my first grade teacher at grant school in the 1970's. I never forgot her. She was my favorite teacher. Such a lovely lady.

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**Kimberly Woollums Ieffler** - April 26, 2024 at 10:35 AM

JB

“ What a great neighbor and friend to our family! This came as a shock and surprise but then see she was 87! What a life of travel she had!

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**Jollette Boyer** - April 26, 2024 at 08:45 AM

PH

“ Colleen was such an advocate for education & embodied the best in the teaching profession. She & Robert were such a loving pair. There is simply not enough room here to share all the great memories I have of them. They are together once again.

Paul Horel - April 25, 2024 at 11:40 PM

DG

“ Mrs. Putnam was my first grade teacher. She was such an amazing teacher! She inspired me to become a teacher. I was blessed to have her hand me a scholarship award from her sorority as a senior in high school. She will forever inspire me to be the best teacher I can be. Thank you Mrs. Putnam! I hope I make you proud.

Dacia O'Brien Gutcher - April 25, 2024 at 08:07 PM

CB

“ Connie VanDyne Brees sent a virtual gift in memory of Bonnie "Colleen" Putnam



Connie VanDyne Brees - April 25, 2024 at 03:13 PM

CB

And God calls another angel Love family of the late Verlin and Anna Vandyne

Connie VanDyne Brees - April 25, 2024 at 03:15 PM

SS

“*Mrs. Putnam was my kindergarten teacher in Unionville, Missouri and I absolutely loved her. She got me off to a great start in education! I invited her to my high school graduation in 1981 and to my surprise, she attended and saw me honored as salutatorian of my class. I am the proud owner of one of her dishes she recently gave me. My sincere condolences to the family.*

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**Sharla Stogdill** - April 25, 2024 at 01:06 PM