In Memoriam
By Nicki Keele

Karen S. Rodenberg

Karen Sue Rodenberg was born Jan. 13, 1952, in Enid, Okla., to Kenneth and Gloria (Gramlich) Rodenberg and passed away on Sunday, May 18, 2014, in Mesa, Ariz.

Karen grew up on the family farm and graduated from Drummond High School in 1970. She graduated from Oklahoma State University in 1974, with a bachelor of science degree in physical education and in 1979 with a master of science degree.

For more than 36 years, Karen worked in the education field, serving as a coach; teacher; elementary, high school and middle school principal; athletic director; and school superintendent. She was known affectionately as “Miss R” by her students.

She coached girls’ basketball, volleyball, track and softball. She began her career with Enid Pubic Schools, serving as a high school and elementary school physical education teacher from 1974-78. She was the girls’ basketball coach and science teacher in Cyril Public Schools from 1980-82. She was the girls’ basketball coach and science teacher in Greenfield Public Schools from 1982-84. In Ripley Public Schools, she served as girls’ basketball coach, science teacher and athletic director from 1984-1988. In 1988, she was named Coach of the Year by the Stillwater NewsPress All Area Basketball Teams and received a citation from the Oklahoma Senate. In 1988-1989, she served as a physical education teacher for the Los Angeles unified school district in Los Angeles, Calif. From 1990-91, she was the elementary school principal at Caney Valley Public School and from 1991-1998 she served as middle school principal for Woodland Public Schools. She served on the faculty in the biochemistry department, writing grants, at Oklahoma State University from 1998-1999. She became the Aline-Cleo Elementary School principal from 1999-2001. She served as the superintendent, high school and elementary school principal at Waukomis Public Schools from 2000-2005. In 2005, she was awarded the Award of Excellence by Waukomis Masonic Lodge for her dedicated efforts to the students of Waukomis Public Schools. She was athletic director at the Boone-Apache school district from 2005 until her retirement in 2010. In 2010, Karen retired to the Good Life Resort in Mesa, Ariz. While at Good Life, she served as the assistant activities director until 2013.

Karen had a larger-than-life personality and a huge heart and touched the lives of so many students, friends and family. Who can forget her booming voice, foot stomp and sense of humor? She believed it was important to live a life full of confidence, purpose and passion. She believed everyone was special and had a unique contribution to make. She loved the Lord, her family, friends and students. She was a lifelong member of Salem United Methodist Church in Drummond. Karen was preceded in death by her parents, Kenneth and Gloria Rodenberg, and uncles, Charles and Don Gramlich. She is survived by her aunt, Pat Lamons of Keller, Texas; her uncle David and aunt Mitzi Rodenberg of Drummond, Okla.; her uncle James and aunt Beverly Rodenberg of Owasso, Okla.; her aunt Dorothy Gramlich of Riverside, Calif.; and many cousins and dear friends. Karen will live on in our hearts, and she will never be forgotten. Memorials, in lieu of flowers, can be made to Salem United Methodist Church, P.O. 120, Drummond, OK 73735 or American Heart Association. A memorial service was held at the Salem United Methodist Church in Drummond, OK on June 8, 2014.

A memorial service will be held at Good Life Resort in January 2015.

Submitted by family
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