



Ruth Ireland Pierce

September 14, 1936 - October 12, 2017

Committed to a simple lifestyle based on her Basic Buddhist Vows, Ruth Pierce was genuinely interested in others and loved sharing stories. She was born in Cleveland, Ohio. Upon graduating from Vassar College, she ventured out to Northern California, where in 1959 she married David Merwyn Pierce in Richmond. In 1966, she received a master's degree in social work from U.C. Berkeley. Her work at the Florence Crittenden Home in San Francisco inspired her to write *Single and Pregnant* in 1970. She was passionate about sailing her boat, DAKINI, and she enjoyed a series of beloved rescue dogs. Ruth was also passionate about keeping Benicia's waterfront natural, undeveloped, and accessible to all. To that end, she helped gather signatures for a ballot initiative to change the land designation from "waterfront commercial" to "waterfront park." Her friends remember her empathy, generosity, and the warm smile across her face as she raised her eyebrows in anticipation. She is survived by many loving friends and family members.

Memorial donations suggested to THE TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND, 101 Montgomery Street, Suite 900, San Francisco, CA 94104, (415) 495-4014, EIN 23-7222333.

Comments



“ I remember Ruth when she was a friend of Alfred Peet. My home was originally the guest house to the home Alfred lived in for a quarter century in the hills of Berkeley. I knew Alfred very well. In the early 1980s, I was helping five sibling Vietnamese boat people, four sisters and a brother, get started in America. They were at my home for dinner pretty frequently. Ruth joined those dinners and with great delight brought out the stories of each of the siblings as well as their experiences as recent immigrants adjusting to a new culture. She gently helped them with their new language along the way. I deeply regret not staying in better touch after she moved to Benicia. The Vietnamese siblings are doing quite well, and I feel Ruth played an important early role.

Richard Norgaard - February 21, 2020 at 01:58 PM



“ It is heart-breaking news that Ruth has passed. She was a very gentle soul. She walked quietly, but genuinely through this world, with the very best of intentions. Her altruism was boundless, as was her kindness. My family always held her dear.

Willa Madden - September 05, 2019 at 07:49 PM



“ I had been Ruth's dental hygienist in Berkeley Ca for about ten years. She and I were very friendly with each other and I had a feeling she had passed when she missed her last cleaning several months ago. She was a very sweet, spunky and caring woman who I will miss seeing twice a year.

m. mendoza - May 28, 2018 at 04:17 AM



“ We knew Ruth as a wonderful customer at Bookshop Benicia. She was a delight and much loved by all of us. We are so saddened by her passing. An amazing woman completely engaged by life.

Bookshop Benicia - November 21, 2017 at 09:55 PM



“ I met Ruthie at San Francisco State in the 1960s. Yes, we had a brief fling, but after that passed, something more caring and appreciative emerged and lasted. Though we had not been in touch for many years, Ruthie was a life-long source of inspiration on living a meaningful life.

I vividly remember her enthusiasm during the years she worked with Natasha Surendorf at the Florence Crittendon home supporting single women in their struggles for reproductive freedom and to survive as single parents. I've thought of Ruthie countless times over the last decade as the battle for reproductive freedom has grown to alarming proportions and attacks on Planned Parenthood have become more powerful and vicious.

I regret not seeing more of her in our final years but feel unqualified joy about the life she lived.

Peter Pursley
1308 1/2 Addison Street
Berkeley



Peter Pursley - November 14, 2017 at 11:51 PM



“ I worked with Ruth when her mother's home was to be sold. She was a delight. She came to our home on Christmas with her mother and after her mother passed each Christmas she was in Florida, she came to our house for a visit. We always lit our Christmas tree with her in the Danish tradition and she spoke of her Buddhist principals and her sail boat and her dogs. She seemed to have a lovely spirit/ I will always remember her kind face and empathetic ways. She is missed and we are saddened to learn of her passing.

candace friis - July 18, 2019 at 09:42 PM