



## Irmengard Rauch Carr

April 17, 1933 - January 9, 2025

Irmengard Rauch Carr was born in Dayton, Ohio on April 17, 1933 to Konrad Rauch and Elizabeth (Knott), immigrants from Bavaria, Germany. She grew up speaking German at home along with her brothers Connie and Joe, and her sister Anne. Irmengard attended Catholic schools in Dayton before matriculating at the University of Dayton. She went on to obtain a masters in Germanic Languages from Ohio State, and a Ph.D. from the University of Michigan.

A trailblazing woman in academia, she took her first position in 1962 at the University of Wisconsin, teaching German Linguistics. While at Madison, she met the love of her life, Gerald Carr. Three years her senior, after having served in the Marines, Gerald was pursuing a Ph.D. in the German Department at Wisconsin, and was her student. They were married on June 10, 1965, and in 1966 they relocated to Pittsburgh, where Irmengard taught at the University of Pittsburgh and Gerald taught at Duquesne University. Irmengard was a true feminist who never gave up her maiden name - a strong German woman.

In 1967 they welcomed their first son Chris into the world. The family moved to central Illinois in 1968, where Irmengard taught at the University of Illinois and Gerald at Eastern Illinois University, settling in the small farm town of Villa Grove, about equidistant between the two institutions. In 1969 their second son, Greg, was born. In 1984 the family permanently relocated to northern California, residing in Benicia, so that Irmengard could accept a position at U.C. Berkeley.

Irmengard spearheaded the Germanic Linguistics program there until her retirement in 2021. Throughout her long academic career, Irmengard regularly collaborated with Gerald, who served as a co-editor on many of her scholarly works including books, journals, conference proceedings, and other publications. Irmengard and Gerald were a team, and Gerald was the man behind the woman.

While at Berkeley, Irmengard and long-time colleague Thomas Shannon propelled theirs into one of the leading Germanic Linguistics program in the world, instructing and directing the dissertations of countless Ph.D. students, as well as teaching undergraduate courses. She published in scores of scholarly journals, convened conferences, and edited and authored several books on Germanic Linguistics. In addition to Germanic Linguistics, she also taught, published widely, and convened conferences on Semiotics – the study of signs and symbols and their use and interpretation. Late in her career, she turned her focus to Zoosemiotics, the semiotic study of the use of signs among animals and in cross-species communication.

Her commitment to semiotics mirrored Irmengard's voracious intellectual curiosity. She was able to harmonize the data-driven analytical rigor of historical linguistics with the capaciousness and indeterminacy of semiotics. Irmengard could toggle between the particular and the general, and the concrete and the abstract, in the never-finished search for the universal and transcendent. While ever the empiricist, this facility was also a reflection of her deep Catholic faith.

Irmengard Rauch Carr died peacefully on the morning of January 9, 2025. At her side was her longtime caregiver Siosi who remarked the day before Irmi passed away that "She is one tough cookie all the way around, I'm not gonna lie." Irmengard left the world in her house, on her own terms.

Irmengard was preceded in death by her husband Gerald (October 21, 2024), and her brothers Conrad and Joseph. She is survived by son Chris and wife Karen, and their sons Justin and Ethan; son Greg and wife Mary; and sister Anne.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be directed to:  
Kaiser Vallejo Hospice

975 Sereno Drive

Bayview North Building

Suite 1112

Vallejo, CA 94589

# Cemetery Details

## St. Dominic's Cemetery

Hillcrest Avenue & East 5th Street  
Benicia, CA 94510

# Previous Events

## Mass of Christian Burial

JAN 18. 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM (PT)

St Dominic's Catholic Church  
475 E I St  
Benicia, CA 94510  
(707) 747-7220

## Burial

JAN 18. 2:00 PM (PT)

St. Dominic's Cemetery  
Hillcrest Avenue & East 5th Street  
Benicia, CA 94510

# Tribute Wall

GK

“ One of my first trips and visits to the USA also took me to a relative of my grandmother from Germany, to Irmis and Gerald's house.



She and Gerald showed me around their beautiful home and the wine cellars in Nappa Valley :-), she was a great hostess! I will also always remember the hot tub outside in the garden that I was allowed to use.

We shared so many stories even though we barely knew each other, we shared our lives and had so much fun! Since then every year we sent each other a Christmas card, which always made me very happy.

She was a very clever and eloquent woman with a great sense of humor, always curious and open to everything new. I will remember her and our time together for a long time to come. There should be many more Irmis in this world.

Gaby Kiss and family from Heroldsberg / Bavaria / Germany

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Gaby Kiss - June 10, 2025 at 04:24 PM

IV

“ My deepest gratitude to my Doktormutter! You had a unique way of guiding, encouraging and supporting without directing, of letting us find our own path while ensuring we wouldn't get truly lost.

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Ilona Vandergriff - February 04, 2025 at 12:50 AM

YW

“ Yue W. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Irmengard Rauch Carr.

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Yue W. - January 19, 2025 at 01:23 PM

IR

“ Mein herzliches Beileid zum Ableben von Irmengard. Als ich 10 Jahre alt war, bekamen wir Besuch aus den Staaten. Das waren Onkel Konrad, Tante Else, Irmie und Anneliese. Irmie muß so um die 20 Jahre alt gewesen sein und Anneliese etwas älter. Wir hatten einen ständigen Briefwechsel mit Tante Else.

10 Jahre später kam das Brautkleid von Irmie bei uns an. Meine Schwester und ich hatten beide dieses Kleid an unseren Hochzeiten getragen. Einige Jahre später besuchten uns Irmie mit Gerald und den beiden Jungs Greg und Chis. Als Greg so um die 20 Jahre alt war besuchte er uns mit Gerald. Auch Joe und Roe mit Julie waren bei uns zu Gast.

Meine Tochter Gaby war zu Besuch bei Irmie und Gerald und wurde liebevoll aufgenommen. Jedes Jahr bekamen wir Weihnachtsgrüße von Irmie und Gerald. Nur dieses Jahr nicht. Da erfuhr ich, daß Gerald schon gestorben war. Und jetzt, daß Irmie ihm gefolgt war. Irmie war immer etwas Besonderes für uns. Wir haben sie bewundert und mit vollem Respekt nehme ich Abschied von einer starken und selbstbewußten Frau und Tante. With love Irmie from Germany (I was named after her)

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Irmie - January 18, 2025 at 02:45 PM

AC

“ I am doubly saddened to learn about the passing of our dear and wonderful friend and colleague Irmengard, while learning at the same time about dear Gerald’s passing as well.

... Found myself immediately flashbacking to decades of vibrant conferences and intellectual dialogues, to Irmengard’s generosity and grace, along with her immense devotion to her students and colleagues, and to the semiotics and linguistics research she sustained with so much passion as an impeccable scholar. Among so many memories to select, etched in my mind is the 5-minute standing ovation Irmengard received at the conclusion of the Fifth Congress of the International Association for Semiotics Studies which she had tirelessly organized in Berkeley for over 800 people in 1994. She was the ultimate professors’ Professor!

Attached, as a minute memento of scholarship and love, is this delightful group photo of the 2015 aficionados presenters at the 30th yearly Semiotic Circle of California Meeting. In sync with Gerald, Irmengard founded the SCC as well as directed the IJGLSA (International Journal of Germanic Linguistics and Semiotic Analysis.) We are all indebted to her for the articles of ours that she published in the Journal.

So much more to state for her giving of herself throughout her joyfully lived life and career...

Sadly and gratefully,

Alain J.-J. Cohen



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Alain J.-J. Cohen - January 18, 2025 at 04:32 AM

SY

“ *Profesor Rauch, thank you so much for being my mentor/advisor at Berkeley and beyond. You'll be missed forever!*  
*Simona Yee*

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**Simona Yee** - January 17, 2025 at 09:00 PM

SY

“ *Simona Yee purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Irmengard Rauch Carr.*



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**Simona Yee** - January 17, 2025 at 08:47 PM

SY

“ *Simona Yee planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Irmengard Rauch Carr.*

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**Simona Yee** - January 17, 2025 at 08:47 PM

CH

“ *"Ist sie mir leiblichen tot, in meiner gedechtnuß lebet sie mir doch immer." (Der Ackermann aus Böhmen, XXIII. capitel)*

*Thank you so much, dear Prof. Rauch, for everything.*

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**Carolyn H.** - January 17, 2025 at 01:08 PM

MT

“ *Marquita T. planted a grove of 5 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Irmengard Rauch Carr.*

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**Marquita T.** - January 17, 2025 at 12:08 PM

CH

“ Carolyn H. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Irmengard Rauch Carr.

Carolyn H. - January 17, 2025 at 11:55 AM

SS

“ You'll be forever missed, Professor Rauch. Thank you so much for being my friend, mentor, and adviser. May you continue to seek the rūnos (mystíria), which was passed on from Jesus to his disciples.

Scott Shell - January 17, 2025 at 10:00 AM

CK

“ Professor Rauch was my mentor and "Doktormutter" at Berkeley, an experience that truly transformed my life. Condolences to her family and loved ones.

Sean Ketchem

Christopher Ketchem - January 17, 2025 at 09:02 AM



“ Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Irmengard Rauch Carr.



January 15, 2025 at 11:25 PM

RF

“ Roe, Laura, Julie and family. purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Irmengard Rauch Carr.



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**Roe, Laura, Julie and family.** - January 15, 2025 at 08:08 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Irmengard Rauch Carr.



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January 15, 2025 at 04:11 PM

SK

“ Scott K. planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Irmengard Rauch Carr.

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**Scott K.** - January 14, 2025 at 09:30 PM

SS

“ Professor Irmengard Rauch warmly guided me, a foreign student, throughout my studies from my master's to my doctoral degree at UC Berkeley. I learned so much from her about the fields of Germanic linguistics and semiotics. Even after completing my studies, I had the pleasure of meeting Irmengard and Gerald many times at academic conferences held in Berkeley, where we shared our scholarly achievements.

She was also close to my family, and during the years between 2012 and 2015, when my family lived in Walnut Creek, we shared several delightful meals and spent enjoyable moments together. As a former student, I still cherish the memory of the spring gathering she hosted at her home in Benicia with her graduate students in 1995. At that time, my son Daniel was an infant, and he even slept in the master bedroom during the event.

Our last reunion was on August 4th. 2019 in Benicia.

Irmengard and her husband Gerald are truly precious to our family. They made a huge impact on our family and many colleagues. They will be missed beyond measure. I pray that they may now rest in peace in heaven.

Sang Hwan Seong and Family from Seoul National University,  
Korea

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Sang Hwan Seong - January 14, 2025 at 08:33 PM

SR

“ Suin R. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Irmengard Rauch Carr.

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Suin R. - January 14, 2025 at 04:47 PM

SR

“ I would like to send my heartfelt condolences to Professor Rauch's family.

*I met Professor Rauch in 2000, when I was studying abroad at UC Berkeley for a summer session. She graciously met with me to talk about the Ph.D. program in Germanic Linguistics. She encouraged me to apply, and as a result I returned to Berkeley in 2001 as a new grad student. If it hadn't been for Professor Rauch, I would have never pursued a Ph.D., let alone in a foreign country. Soon after I arrived, September 11 happened, and I was terrified to be so far away from my family. Again, Professor Rauch helped me with my fear and home sickness. I decided to stay and push through, and I ended up graduating with my Ph.D. in 2005.*

*I will never forget her kindness as a teacher, her gentle advising, her brilliance as a researcher, and her untiring commitment to her students and the Germanic Linguistics program. Even after I graduated, she supported me from afar as I continued my career in academia. The last time I communicated with her was last summer to let her know that I was putting my case in for full professor. I thanked her for everything she had done for me, as she was THE reason why I ultimately became a professor myself. I truly owe everything to her.*

*Professor Rauch was a role model for me, and I was so happy that my daughter got to meet her in 2016.*

*I didn't find out about Professor Carr's passing until now. Professor Carr was a gentle soul. My fellow grad students and I loved him as much as we loved Professor Rauch. Because she always talked about Gerald in class, we thought it was perfectly fine and acceptable to address him as "Gerald" (instead of Professor Carr) whenever we saw him. He never batted an eye lash at that, and he was always so kind to us.*

*I'm so sad that both of them are gone now, but glad that they were*

*not apart for too long. I will miss them.*

**Suin Roberts** - January 14, 2025 at 04:44 PM

SH

“*Professor Irmengard Rauch warmly guided me, a foreign student, throughout my studies from my master's to my doctoral degree at UC Berkeley. I learned so much from her about the fields of Germanic linguistics and semiotics. Even after completing my studies, I had the pleasure of meeting Irmengard and Gerald many times at academic conferences held in Berkeley, where we shared our scholarly achievements.*

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*Sang Hwan Seong and Family from Seoul National University,  
Korea*



**Seong Sang Hwan** - January 14, 2025 at 09:00 AM



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*Irmengard and her husband Gerald are truly precious to our family. They made a huge impact on our family and many colleagues. They will be missed beyond measure. I pray that they may now rest in peace in heaven.*

*Sang Hwan Seong and Family from Seoul, Korea*



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**Sang Hwan Seong** - January 14, 2025 at 07:20 AM

FF

“ From Sang Hwan Seong and Family purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Irmengard Rauch Carr.



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From Sang Hwan Seong and Family - January 14, 2025 at 05:45 AM

FF

“ From Sang Hwan Seong and Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Irmengard Rauch Carr.

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From Sang Hwan Seong and Family - January 14, 2025 at 05:45 AM

DC

“ Professor Rauch was my dissertation advisor. As a graduate student I learned several archaic Germanic languages from her such as Gothic. We benefited greatly from her many years of scholarship in this field. I also had brief conversations with Professor Rauch about faith. I think it would please her that I offer the following contribution to her legacy:

*Jah qap du im Iesus: ik im sa hlaihs libainais; pana gaggandan du mis ni huggreip jah pana galaubjandan du mis ni þauseip hvanhun (John 6:35 from Bishop Wulfila's 4th century bible translation).*

*Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst (translation from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops).*

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Dr. Michael St. Clair - January 14, 2025 at 12:04 AM