



# Katherine Zeplin Ramsey

FEB 20, 1938 - NOV 8, 2022



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# Katherine Zeplin Ramsey

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**K**atherine Debra Ramsey (née Zeplin) passed away peacefully on November 8, 2022, at the Hacienda at the Canyon in Tucson, Arizona. Kate was born in the small town of Ainsworth, Nebraska on February 20, 1938, and raised in Lexington, Nebraska, the fifth daughter of Nora S. (Murphy) Zeplin and John Zeplin. After losing her father in an airplane accident, she and her siblings were raised by their courageous mother, who provided them with a deep commitment to hard work, family, and their local community. In addition to their chores and outside jobs, they were active in their Catholic parish, and the singing Zeplin sisters became a mainstay at events at school and church.

Kate was gifted with amazing artistic creativity, deep Catholic faith, a ready laugh, and an independent streak that guided her throughout her life. It was in the spirit of that independence and adventure that she moved to the San Francisco Bay Area in the early 1960s, soon to be joined by her sister, Lois, as they forged new paths of careers and self-direction. Kate worked for Bank of America, a role which she relished. When she met Hal Harrison Ramsey III, he became the love of her life. They were married on January 11, 1975, in San Mateo, California, and they made their home nearby in Foster City. They loved walking the town's canals and taking in the fresh air from their apartment balcony, so it was with some trepidation that she and Hal followed his work when it relocated to Tucson, Arizona, in 1983. But it only took her a short time in her newly-constructed home on the east side of Tucson to become a true lover of the desert.

Hal and Kate enjoyed daily hikes in the nearby desert, as well as in Sabino Canyon and on Mount Lemmon, accompanied by their black Doberman, Cassie. They also relished the chance to welcome out-of-state friends and family to their home, introducing them to the wonders of Arizona and its spectacular sunrises and sunsets. In their walks, they always had their eyes open for "found art" -- left-behind metal, car parts, and glass that Kate creatively repurposed into pieces to decorate their yard and home. That home, with its back patio, served as a constant refuge and retreat for them, and for all who joined them in it.



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When Hal passed away suddenly on August 2, 1985, Kate began a new phase of life, coming to embrace her independence again and moving in several circles of tight friends. She especially loved her church friends and her hiking group, both of which supported her through loss and regularly met up for coffee, meals, and shared stories. Kate was also blessed by friendships with neighbors, and she took pride in the way they cared for each other's homes, one another, and their neighborhood. It was also at this time that Kate devoted herself even more completely to her career as an artist.

Kate began what she called her lifelong "partnership with ceramics" when she took an Introduction to Pottery course at her local Parks and Recreation facility in San Mateo, California in the early 1970s. Later, a life-changing trip to Thailand gave her the chance to explore the ancient kilns of the hill-tribe people, and studies at Pima Community College and the University of Arizona (from which she received an Associate's Degree in Fine Arts in 1992) further refined her skills. Kate eventually adopted the maxim that "out of the clay comes the lotus" as an expression of her belief that new miracles were always close at hand each time she fired the kiln she built in her backyard. Though she employed many techniques, her favorite method was "raku," through which glazed bisque-ware is fired quickly, withdrawn from the kiln, and placed in a chamber containing materials such as straw, sawdust, and dried leaves which ignite and create spontaneous patterns on the piece. Kate was also a gifted painter, and she shared her talent teaching children in California and at local churches in Tucson. Throughout her career, her work in both watercolor and clay was regularly featured on consignment at the Desert Artisans' Gallery, The Artery, the Tubac House, and Otero Street Gallery in Tubac.

Just weeks before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Kate made a long-planned move to the newly constructed Hacienda at the Canyon, near Sabino Canyon. She loved the views of the mountains that it provided, and she was blessed to have remarkable people around her as caregivers and friends who accompanied her through her final days. With a frequent laugh and a constant smile, she brightened the lives of all who knew and met her.

Kate is survived by her sister, Patricia Zeplin, of Durango, Colorado, as well as her nieces and nephews Matthew and James Carnes; Chuck, Tony, and Jack Englert; John, David, Paul, and Ann Englert, Jenny Firkins, Catherine Dunham, and Meg Kimbrell; and David, Steven, and Michael Zeplin, and Chrstina Reimers, and many grandnieces and grandnephews, in California, Nebraska, and Colorado. She was preceded in death by her husband, Hal Ramsey, her sisters Jeanne Zeplin, Maureen Zeplin, Mary Ann Englert, Lois Carnes, and her brother James Zeplin.



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Kate will be remembered with a funeral Mass of the Resurrection at St. Anne's Convent (3820 N. Sabino Canyon Road, Tucson, AZ 85750) on Monday, November 14, at 11:00am. A Rosary will precede the Mass at 10:30am. She will be interred at a later date in Skylawn Memorial Park, in San Mateo, California, alongside her beloved husband, Hal, with a view gazing out on the Pacific Ocean.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the [Kino Border Initiative](#) (PO Box 159, Nogales, AZ 85628-0159), St. Anne's Convent of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters (3820 North Sabino Canyon Road, Tucson, AZ 85750), or the Gospel Rescue Mission (326 W. 28th Street, Tucson, AZ 85713).




# Events


**Katherine Zeplin Ramsey**

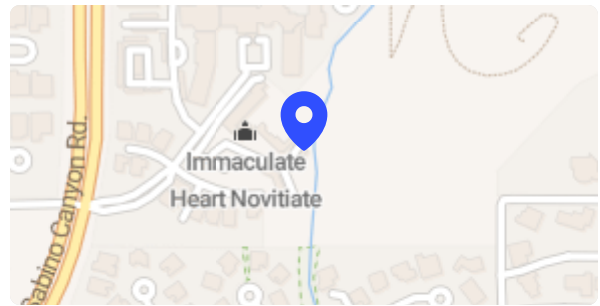
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## Rosary

 **Monday**, November 14, 2022

 10:30 AM MT


 **St. Anne's Convent**  
3820 N. Sabino Canyon Road, Tucson AZ 85750

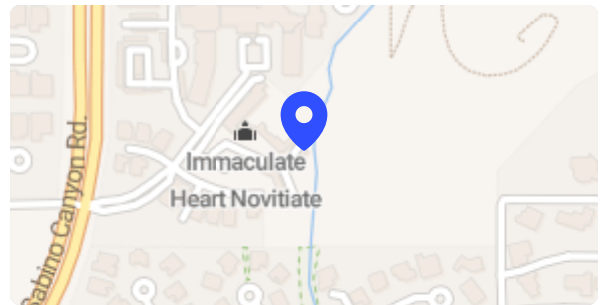


## Funeral Mass

 **Monday**, November 14, 2022

 11:00 AM MT

 **St. Anne's Convent**  
3820 N. Sabino Canyon Road, Tucson AZ 85750





# Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Katherine by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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