



Sue Ann Olson

DEC 9, 1947 - FEB 7, 2026



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Sue Ann Olson, 78, of Tucson, passed away peacefully in her sleep on February 7, 2026.

Born on December 9, 1947, and raised in Des Plaines, Illinois, Sue carried her Midwestern roots with her as she ventured farther from home. She attended Indiana University, earning a degree in education, before making a decisive move out west after graduation. She knew immediately that Tucson, Arizona, was where she belonged. With its desert landscape, sweeping mountain views, and notorious “dry heat,” Tucson suited her perfectly and became her lifelong home.

Sue dedicated her early career to working with children with developmental disabilities, helping to create some of the earliest programs for children who might otherwise have been institutionalized. This work reflected her deep empathy, strong moral compass, and unwavering belief in human dignity. She later joined Cottonwood Tucson, a nationally respected drug and alcohol treatment center, where she spent more than two decades as Director of Marketing before retiring in 2015.

Upon retirement, she discovered a passion for creativity and design, a deepening sense of stewardship of the native flora and fauna surrounding her home, including the massive mesquite tree she nursed back to health. Similarly, she took great pleasure in the abundant wildlife that surrounded her home.

Sue had a gift for finding happiness in everyday moments. She loved a crackling fire on a cool morning, walks in her neighborhood with her beloved dogs, day trips up to Mt. Lemmon, and spending time in Sabino Canyon. She loved a dramatic desert thunderstorm, especially from the North Rim of the Grand Canyon. From her own backyard, she cherished sweeping mountain views and treasured an exceptional sunset.

Adventurous by nature, Sue embraced life with enthusiasm. She skied in Crested Butte, kayaked in Naples, rode horses in Sundance, and marveled at the twilight in Zion Canyon. She played in



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Carlsbad's surf, savored legendary key lime pie in Islamorada, and collected seashells and blackberries in Alabama. Visiting Bluegrass Country, where she met Silver Charm and American Pharoah, was one of the highlights of her life. Yet nothing brought her more joy than her daughter's horses.

Music was another lifelong passion. She had a deep affection for the sounds of the 1960s and '70s, a love of classic film noir, and an unapologetically discerning palate for ice cream. She was also a devoted Indiana Hoosiers fan and proudly wore her Indiana hat when they recently won the national championship.

Forever young at heart, Sue brought people together effortlessly. She had friends from all walks of life, a generous sense of humor, and a knack for finding joy and not taking life too seriously. Known for her thoughtfulness, she had a rare talent for choosing exactly the right gift for those she loved, and she was a loyal, compassionate friend in difficult times. Her guiding philosophy, borrowed from her father, was one of quiet gratitude for each day, and for a life well-lived.

True to her practical nature, Sue approached her sudden cancer diagnosis with grace and acceptance. In her final days, she expressed contentment and peace, sharing that she felt no sense of loss or unfairness, only gratitude for a full and rewarding life.

Above all, Sue will be remembered for her loving and energetic personality and the deep connections she formed with people and places throughout her life.

She is survived by her daughter, Nicole Adams (Matthew Cobb); her step-son, Rob Adams; her brother, Robert Olson (Katy Olson); and her nephews, Michael Olson and Steven Olson. In accordance with her wishes, no public services will be held.



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E

Edith Turcotte posted:

I am so sorry to hear of Sue s passing. My sincere condolences to Nicki & the entire family. I enjoyed the years working with Sue at Cottonwood. Rest easy SueEdie Turcotte

February 24 at 7:30 PM

GC

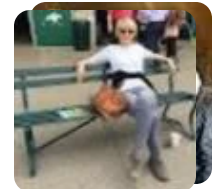
Gary & Linda Cobb posted:

From Gary and Linda Cobb:Unfortunately, we did not get to know Sue very well, but we did have the pleasure of spending a few days with her in Tucson, and her warmth and generosity, her energy and her love of life came through very clearly. Her daughter Nikki, now a part of our family through her marriage to Matthew, is much like her mother. Nikki and Sue were obviously close and shared a lot of the same values and interests. We are very fortunate to have Nikki in our lives and can perhaps know Sue a little bit more through their connection.

February 17 at 2:27 PM

MS

Mary Slaughter shared 2 photos to the **Tribute Wall** album.



February 15 at 5:42 PM



Tribute Wall

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MS

Mary Slaughter posted:

Sue was one of the first people that I met when I moved to Arizona about 50 years ago. We quickly bonded with our interest in working to establish creative educational environments for kids with disabilities and supports for their families. As time went by Sue became a close friend and with a small fun group we formed our own weird family of sorts. I loved to visit her and hike in Sabino Canyon and discuss the ins-and-outs of the characters in All My Children who were staples in our diet. Over this last decade Sue and I became closer friends and would share experiences of attaining "elder" status. We shared our Life Map experiences, always trying to fit all of life pieces into a picture we could make sense of. Sue had such great perspectives on life to offer, always with her Pollyanna perspective. Both of us had a fondness for horses and she plotted a trip for us to take to Kentucky Blue Grass Country in 2018. By using her brilliant networking skills, she arranged for us to personally meet American Pharoah and Silver Charm. And of course whenever we spotted a Dairy Queen on that trip, we had to stop! Later on, we even found a way to own our own little slivers of of a race horse. She remained that stable friend who I could talk with each Sunday afternoon to review all the experiences that life had offered us that week. She would always be contemplative about problems in life and always full of gratitude. I will surely miss her perspective on life and for sure her capacity to laugh at life. I am so very blessed to have been graced with her friendship through much of my life.

February 15 at 5:39 PM

LB

Larry Burstein posted:

I first got to know Sue when I was a swimming coach with Jim at the University Aquatic Club at Bear Down Gym pool. We developed a great friendship during the mid 70s, with many warm lasting memories. Many evenings at their home in the foothills watching sunsets, or torrential rains, or putting together jigsaw puzzles. I would insist on not looking at the picture of the puzzle once we started, but Sue wouldn't have it. Then one day she bought a puzzle (Mickey Mouse face), put the pieces in a plastic bag, and then gave them to me. So Sue. Oh she had the best sense of humor and laugh. We shared many breakfasts at the Blue Willow, and drives in her Datsun 240 Z. And of course, watched Harold and Maude at the Loft Theater. Five times. Always stoned. Always laughing at the opening scene. Which horrified the audiences if they had not seen it yet. She loved that movie, taking Maude's philosophy on life to heart: Cherish life, live life with adventures to its fullest. And especially, take chances. I was blessed to have Sue as a dear friend and have her beautiful soul in my life. Larry Burstein

February 14 at 7:16 AM



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Musomi Mcdowell posted:

I learned a lot from Sue over the many years of working with her and as a friend. She shared many stories of growing up in the Midwest, her love for her daughter, dogs and horses, and her uncanny ability to remember people and things that most would likely forget. We kept up with each other through an occasional lunch, phone calls, and texting. She was a compassionate, fun-loving sweet soul that I will miss dearly. I'm grateful to have known her and to be considered a friend.

February 13 at 9:00 PM



Anonymous planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Sue.



February 13 at 7:46 AM



Kim Sines posted:

Sue was a very dear friend. We worked together for twenty years and had lunch together monthly since her retirement. We texted each other just about daily. During our time as friends we leaned on each other for advice about everything from family to watering plants. Sue had a love for her family, her dogs, a good TV series, nature and a total joy of life itself. I will miss my dear friend, I am grateful for having her friendship for so many years. I have the gift of memories with Sue. I also am so grateful her loved Nikki was there for last days. Sue was a loving and caring person, a gift to us all that had the opportunity to know her.

February 12 at 11:13 AM



Nicole Adams shared 9 photos to the **Tribute Wall** album.

Seasons of Sue



February 12 at 10:09 AM



Media

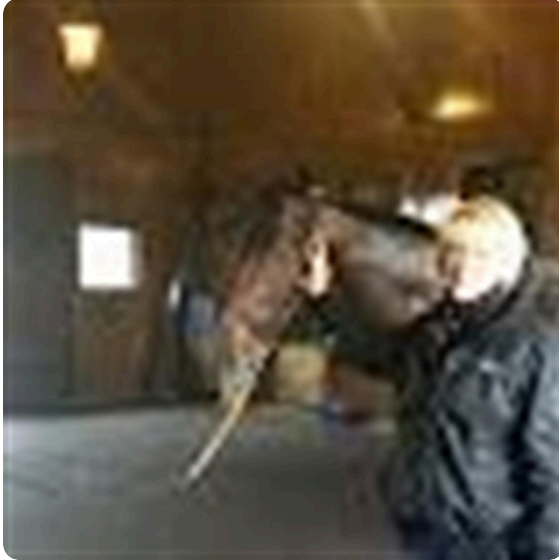
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Memories only last if you share them

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



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