



## Ruth McCorkle

March 4, 2019 - August 17, 2019

Ruth McCorkle, PhD, RN, FAPOS, FAAN, an international leader in healthcare and a pioneer in oncology nursing, symptom science, hospice and palliative care, died peacefully at her home in Connecticut on August 17, 2019 surrounded by her loving family. Born Margaret “Ruth” McCorkle in Johnson City, TN on March 4, 1940, her parents, John Joseph McCorkle and Virginia Upchurch McCorkle, inspired her voracious work ethic.

Her life’s vocation was preceded by experiences with the US Air Force Nurse Corps helping mortally wounded soldiers transition from battlefields in Vietnam to their untimely deaths. Her experience serving our country influenced her vision of the nurse’s role in assisting vulnerable individuals cope with life’s most difficult circumstances, as well as bringing death out from the shadows and ultimately to academia, research endeavors, and clinical practice. This led to her to study at St. Christopher's Hospice in London and later to cofound the Hospice of Seattle and the Northwest Regional Oncology Society, culminating in the development of the Symptom Distress Scale and the Enforced Social Dependency Scale, both groundbreaking measures in psychosocial oncology.

As Principal Investigator on seven clinical trials, McCorkle furthered the role of Advance Practice Nurses on quality of life and survival among chronically ill patients. As Florence Schorske Wald Professor Emerita of Nursing and Professor Emerita of Medicine and Public Health at Yale University, McCorkle continued her work as Director of Psychosocial Oncology at the Yale Comprehensive Cancer Center until her retirement in the Spring of 2019. McCorkle's professional career also included stints as Professor of Nursing at the University of Washington, Professor of Nursing at the University of Pennsylvania, and Associate Director of Cancer Control at the University of Pennsylvania Cancer Comprehensive Center.

A prolific writer, McCorkle's works appear in many professional nursing and medical journals in the US and abroad. Among her innumerable accolades, she was the first non-medical research recipient of a National Cancer Institute Research Training Grant, was elected to the Institute of Medicine in 1990, and was named Nurse Scientist of the Year by the Council of Nurse Researchers in 1993. In 2017 she received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Yale Cancer Center, and in 2018 received the American Academy of Nursing's highest honor as a "Living Legend".

McCorkle's career was second only to her love for family and friends. She will be lovingly remembered by her six children, granddaughter, sister, three nieces, and countless protégés. Calling Hours will be from 4:00 - 7:00 pm at

Sisk Brothers Funeral Home, 3105 Whitney Ave., Hamden on Tuesday, Aug. 20th. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Smilow Cancer Center at Yale New Haven Hospital, 35 Park St., New Haven, CT 06511

# Previous Events

## Calling hours

AUG **20**. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Sisk Brothers Funeral Home  
3105 Whitney Ave.  
Hamden, CT 06518  
(203) 288-7114  
[siskfuneral@sbcglobal.net](mailto:siskfuneral@sbcglobal.net)

# Tribute Wall

LR

“ On behalf of the Society of Air Force Nurses, please know we are mourning with you the death of our sister nurse, Ruth. It takes a patriot, willing to give of themselves to other human beings in their time of need, to step forth and join the ranks of our U. S. Air Force Nurse Corps. Your beloved one will be mourned and missed by many who served alongside her. We will include her name in our Memorial Program of the Society of Air Force Nurses in commemoration of her life and service to our nation.

*With Sincerest Regards and Gratitude,  
Wendy S. Collins, Lt Col, USAF, Nurse Corps (Retired)*



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**LtCol Wendy S. Collins, USAF, NC Ret** - March 27, 2025 at 10:37 AM

AA

“ Ruth was my very best friend at Yale. She was so proud of all her children and her granddaughter. She was a great women. The world will be less bright without her. Prayers and blessings to John, Dave, Amanda and all her family. 😭

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**Ann Ameling** - August 19, 2019 at 05:04 PM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Ruth McCorkle.



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August 19, 2019 at 04:14 PM

NF

“ *Dear John and Family,  
I was so saddened to read about your mom. Our prayers and thoughts are with you at this extremely difficult time.  
With deepest condolences,  
Nancy, John, Jason, His Wife Lisa, Mark, His Wife Fernanda Ferraro.  
St. Stephen School-Grade 2 Teacher*

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**Nancy Ferraro** - August 19, 2019 at 03:11 PM

KB

“ *Rest in Peace Aunt Ruth for you are no longer in pain. We will miss you dearly. We will miss you at Thanksgiving dinners and will cherish our times we were at the beach together. Good times were had by all. She was always there to help anyone if they needed it. She wrote letters of recommendations for my girls when they applied for college. Hugs and prayers to Marie, Greg, Erin, Tracy and Robyn. Hugs and prayers to Amanda, David, Nick, John, Jessie and Anna. From Ginny, Donny, Kim, Sam and Allie.*

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**Kimberly Bock** - August 19, 2019 at 12:44 PM