

IN MEMORIAM — PAST FACULTY



Martha Ann "Monk" King Baird

Martha Ann "Monk" King Baird, beloved teacher and dedicated volunteer, died Nov. 15, 2025, in Nashville at the age of 94. Mrs. Baird was a graduate of Christian College (now Columbia College) in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, and George Peabody College for Teachers, part of Vanderbilt

University, where she pledged Phi Beta Phi women's sorority and fostered her deep love for service.

She shared her gifts in the Harpeth Hall classroom as a cherished math teacher and tutor. A longtime neighbor of the school, she lived nearby for many years, often working in her garden and befriending Harpeth Hall students in the neighborhood. She was also a tireless community volunteer, supporting organizations including Habitat for Humanity, Meals on Wheels, and Loaves

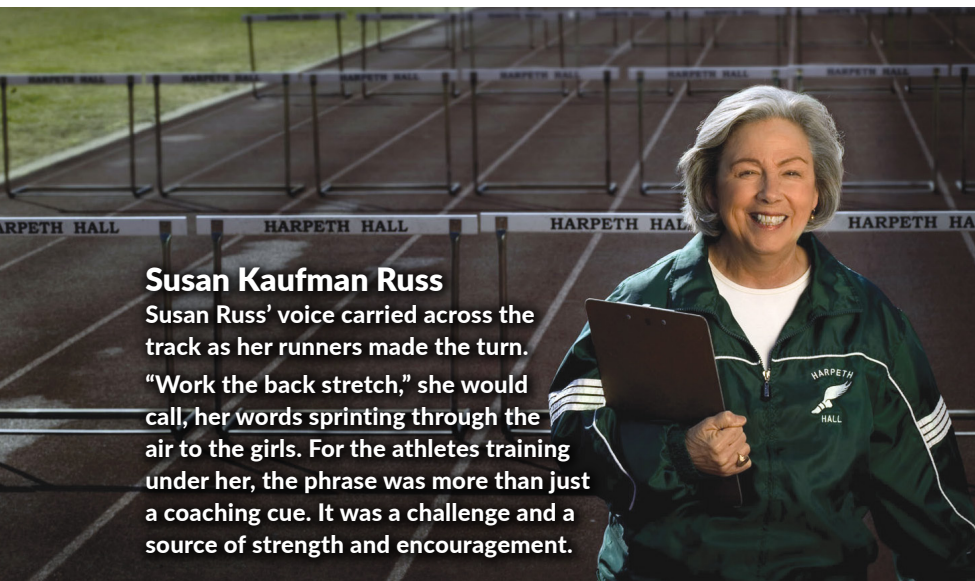


and Fishes, and traveled widely for service work, including builds in Ireland and Hawaii, mission trips to Honduras and Guatemala, and relief efforts along the Gulf Coast following Hurricane Katrina.

She is survived by her husband of 70 years, Harry G. Baird, and their

children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. **Known for her warmth, humor, and welcoming presence, she delighted all who knew her with her hearty laugh and an unmistakable sparkle in her eyes. She will be deeply missed.**

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Susan Kaufman Russ

Susan Russ' voice carried across the track as her runners made the turn.

"Work the back stretch," she would call, her words sprinting through the air to the girls. For the athletes training under her, the phrase was more than just a coaching cue. It was a challenge and a source of strength and encouragement.

Susan Russ, who built championship programs, expanded opportunities for women in sports, and became one of the most accomplished high school coaches in Tennessee history, died on March 27, 2026, in Franklin, Tennessee.

She spent her life and career championing the value and potential of female athletes, often long before institutions were willing to invest in their programs.

She earned her master's degree in physical education from Murray State University in 1966 and began teaching at the University of Tennessee at Martin. She later moved to the University of Memphis, then known as Memphis State University, where she began building the work that would define her career. At a time when women's athletics received little support, Coach Russ built the school's track and field program from the ground up. Before Title IX, funding for women's sports was scarce. Recruitment support did not exist. Practice time was limited. Because the

women's team could not train at the same time as the men's team, her athletes often practiced in darkness. Coach Russ adapted. She moved practices to early mornings where they would run "and watch the sunrise," Coach Russ recalled in the book "Title IX, Pat Summitt, and Tennessee's Trailblazers: 50 Years, 50 Stories" by Harpeth Hall archivist and past social sciences teacher Mary Ellen Pethel, Ph.D. In the afternoons, Coach Russ found nearby fields and pastures where her runners could train.

When Title IX reshaped opportunities in college athletics, Coach Russ was ready.

From 1972 to 1979, she built a nationally competitive track and field program at Memphis State and founded the university's first women's cross country team.

In 1973, she organized the Memphis State Invitational, drawing nationally ranked teams and coaches and growing the meet into a co-ed event.

"What did Title IX mean to me and my girls?" Coach Russ asked in the "Tennessee's Trailblazers" book. "It put us on the track."

In 1979, Coach Russ moved to Nashville and joined Harpeth Hall, where she built one of the most successful high school track and cross-country programs in the state.

Over 33 years, her track and field teams won 19 regional championships, 12 state championships, and finished as state runner-up nine times. She coached at least one individual state champion in 28 of those seasons. Her cross-country teams added six state titles and 21 regional championships. Including two relay team championships, Coach Russ won 20 state titles, the most by any coach in Tennessee history.

Her influence at Harpeth Hall extended well beyond the track.

Barbara Ann “Bobbi” Miller Graves

Barbara Ann “Bobbi” Miller Graves passed away on April 15, 2026, in Nashville at the age of 90. A graduate of Kentucky Wesleyan College who also studied at George Peabody College for Teachers at Vanderbilt University, she began her career teaching at Central High School. A devoted member of the Harpeth Hall community, Mrs. Graves served as a trustee from 1980 to 1983 and was a proud Harpeth Hall parent and later grandparent. She was also an active civic leader, contributing her time and energy to organizations including Westminster Presbyterian Church, the Junior League of Nashville, and Cheekwood, and participated in a medical mission to Africa, where she taught school every day alongside her husband, who served as a surgeon.

A lifelong learner with a deep passion for education, Mrs. Graves was known to read widely, and even to read the dictionary for pleasure. She was a joyful, spirited presence — curious,



quick-witted, and full of warmth. She found particular happiness in her garden and in gathering family and friends, and was equally known for her humor, spunk, and playful mischief, bringing laughter wherever she went.

She was preceded in death by her daughter Ann Redman Graves, who attended Harpeth Hall, her husband, Herschel Anderson Graves Jr., and her sisters-in-law Virginia Love Graves Bowman WB '41 and Lucy Graves Barnett WB '47. She is survived by her daughters Alice Graves Ball '80, Elizabeth Graves McAllister '83, and Miller Graves '85, her son, Andy, her granddaughter Katy Adams Blocker '01, her niece Jennie Graves Bowman '69, and a wide circle of family

and friends, including grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces, and nephews.

She will be remembered for her deep love of family, her generosity of spirit, and the laughter, curiosity, and spark she brought to every life she touched.

As athletic director from 1986 to 2005, Russ led a period of broad athletic success across the school. During her tenure, Harpeth Hall teams won state championships in swimming, basketball, golf, lacrosse, volleyball, and tennis. She pushed for stronger programs, more opportunities, and a grander vision of what girls' athletics could be.

“Susan had a steady way about her,” Harpeth Hall Head of School Jess Hill said. “She saw students clearly and met them where they were, while always asking them to grow. I am forever grateful for the way she helped generations of young women come to know their strengths and carry themselves with confidence. Her guidance took shape in the work ethic and sense of responsibility her athletes showed to one another.”

The landscape for girls athletics in Tennessee was enriched by Coach Russ, and her work earned recognition across decades, including the TSSAA Distinguished Service Recognition Award, three Tennessee State Track Coach of the Year honors, and the National Federation of State High School Associations South Region Coach of the Year Award in 2003. She also served for many years as a TSSAA track and field official and was widely regarded as one of the sport's most knowledgeable voices.

Her honors filled halls of fame: the University of Memphis Hall of Fame in 1987, the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame in 2005, the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association Hall of Fame in 2008, and the Harpeth Hall Athletic Hall of Fame in 2013. In 2022, TSSAA recognized her as a Title IX Trailblazer.

“Susan's legacy carries on through the students she coached and in the enduring success of the program she helped build,” Ms. Hill said.



In all she accomplished, her family remained at the center of her life. She was a devoted mother and grandmother. Her children grew up alongside practices and meets. Her schedule was full, but she made it home each evening for family dinner. Later, she found joy in cheering on her grandchildren at their own games and performances.

She is survived by her husband of 60 years, Kent; her sons, Chris Russ and Andy Russ; her daughter, Marti Russ Jeffords '90; six grandchildren; and a large extended family.

For generations of athletes, though, her legacy echoes in the language she gave them.

Work the back stretch. And keep going.

Helen Merker Gray WB '44, of Kansas City, Kansas, passed away Sept. 15, 2025. She worked for the IRS for many years and was involved in many community organizations. Helen is survived by one son, one daughter, two granddaughters, three grandsons, and four great-grandchildren.

Van Blackie Cooke WB '45, of San Diego, passed away Nov. 16, 2025. A graduate of Pine Manor College in Boston, she spent more than 70 years in California and worked in the administration at the University of California hospitals. She was part of a multigenerational family connected to Ward Seminary and Ward-Belmont, including her mother, Van Meter Proctor Blackie WB '23, and her aunt, Mary Bryan Proctor Britt WB '34. She was preceded in death by her husband, brother, and son. She is survived by her daughter, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, granddaughter, and three great-grandchildren.

Joyce Hare Conrad WB '47, of Troy, Alabama, passed away Nov. 10, 2025. Joyce was a teacher, and she was passionate about art, as well as reading. She is survived by two sisters, two sons, one daughter, six grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren.

Naomi Corinne "Connie" Williams King WB '47, of Nashville, passed away Feb. 9, 2026. Connie was involved in many schools and served as the Ward-Belmont representative to the Harpeth Hall Board of Trustees from 2005-2009. She was a member of First Presbyterian Church. Connie is survived by her daughter, Connie King Jones '73, three sons, grandchildren including Jean King Signor '95 and Charlotte King de la Pena '02, great-grandchildren, nieces, and nephews.

Betty Carol Pace Clark WB '48, of Glasgow, Kentucky, passed away Dec. 23, 2025. Betty Carol had a career in hospitality, owned a Holiday Inn, was president of a bank, and was the first female director of the local chamber of commerce. She is survived by her son, daughter, sister, nieces, and nephews.

Jane McQuiddy Longhurst WB '48, of Nashville, passed away on April 20, 2026. Inspired by her hero, Cornelia Fort WB '36, Jane fulfilled a lifelong dream in her late 40s of becoming a pilot and celebrated that achievement by making her first solo flight on her 50th birthday. She is survived by her sons and grandchildren.

Mary Wayne Hammond Mader WB '48, of Nashville, passed away on Nov. 25, 2025. She was a life member and former president of the Fannie Battle Day Home for Children. She is survived by her son, daughter-in-law, grandson, niece, and nephews.

Jackie Watkins Dyar WB '49, of Orlando, Florida, passed away March 19, 2026. Jackie is survived by her son, sister, nephew, and nieces.

Shirley Berger Lechleiter WB '49, of Nashville, passed away April 11, 2026, at age 94. She graduated from Vanderbilt University, where she was a member of the Delta Delta Delta sorority. Community service was a lifelong priority for her with hands-on participation in the Episcopal Church. She was the first female senior warden at Christ Church Cathedral, a St. Luke's Community House volunteer for 65 years, and a volunteer for Fannie Battle, Harris-Hillman School, the Boy Scouts, Red Cross, and Second Harvest Food Bank. She was preceded in death by her husband of 71 years, sisters Donnie Creighton Norman '52, Mary Knox Berger Pilkerton '55, and Elinor Berger Peek '60, and cousin Myrtle Ann Meiers Archer WB '50. She is survived by her sons, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews.

Frances Stepp Ragland WB '50, of Nashville, passed away Jan. 19, 2026. She is survived by two sons, two granddaughters, a sister, four great-grandchildren, nieces, and nephews.

Susan Kidd Diacon WB '51, of Tulsa, Oklahoma, passed away Feb. 21, 2026. She was a community volunteer, gave cooking presentations, and was an avid Oklahoma State fan. Susan is survived by her daughter, son, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, brother, nieces, and nephews.

Dorothy Breen Williams WB '51, of Birmingham, Alabama, passed away Dec. 21, 2025. She worked as a preschool teacher and spent time volunteering and tutoring young students. Dorothy is survived by four sons, one daughter, 13 grandchildren, and 16 great-grandchildren.

Mary Anne Wachal Hooper '52, of Weatherford, Texas, passed away Dec. 31, 2025. Mary Anne was a talented writer and poet and was a lifelong member of the Atlanta Choir Guild. She is survived by her husband, daughter, son, four grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

Joan Askew Stevenson '52, of Atlanta, passed away Feb. 6, 2026. She was a teacher and also owned an antique and decor store. She is survived by two daughters, one son, four grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Nancy Lassiter Kurtz '53, of Huntsville, Alabama, passed away April 15, 2025. Nancy was involved in many Huntsville organizations, loved to sew, and was an avid reader. She is survived by her son, daughter, and two grandsons.

Lynne Atkins Lackey Gustave '55, of Nashville, passed away Jan. 28, 2026. Lynne had a lifelong love of writing and journalism and was an avid tennis player. She is survived by two daughters, including Brenner Lackey McDonald '81, and four grandchildren.

Sally Cheshire Habermeyer '58, of Tampa, Florida, passed away Dec. 6, 2025. Sally was an extremely gifted artist, seamstress, dollhouse constructor, and had a needlepoint business. She is survived by her husband, two sons, a brother, and four grandchildren.

Judy Lackey Huddleston '58, of Memphis, passed away on Jan. 21, 2026. Judy worked for several banks and was active in her church choir. She is survived by her sister Linda Lackey Elder '56 of Nashville, three daughters, one son, eight grandsons, six granddaughters and 22 great-grandchildren.

Lucy White Hoffman '60, of Knoxville, passed away after a brief illness on Sept. 17, 2025. A trailblazer in the Nashville real estate industry, Lucy is survived by her children, granddaughter, nieces, nephews, and extended family, including her sister, Georgeanna White Payne '52, her niece, Laurie Payne Nicholson '74, and her great-niece, Katie Nicholson '16.

Cynthia Poteat Sewell '61, of Nashville, passed away Dec. 19, 2025. She was a preschool teacher, owned Harpeth Gallery, and was active in several community organizations. Cynthia is survived by her two sons, two grandsons, and two granddaughters.

Ann Gayle Guppton Hall '63, of Nashville, passed away on Nov. 25, 2025. She was a passionate horsewoman and avid gardener. She is survived by her husband, brothers, her daughter, Holly Hall Hirschman '88, son, daughter-in-law, Haylee Waddey Hall '86, and two grandsons.

Audrey Kennedy Brown '64, of Nashville, passed away on March 24, 2026. Her first career was in social work, and later in life she was awarded her CPA certification. She was a senior manager, as well as her firm's payroll tax and state tax specialist. She is survived by her son, brother, and sister, Marilyn Kennedy Hendon '58.

Ann Candice "Candy" Farrar Johnsey '69, of Dallas, passed away on April 10, 2026. She is survived by her husband, three children, and grandchildren.