

**Loree (Lora Lee)
Rackstraw**

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2018



Loree (Lora Lee) Rackstraw, 86, died Tuesday, May 8, 2018, in Grinnell.

Loree's life will be celebrated on July 7, 2018, from 2 to p.m., at the Hartman Reserve Interpretive Building in Cedar Falls.

Contributions in Loree's memory can be made to Iowa Public Radio. Memories and condolences may be shared with her family on the Smith Funeral Home website at www.smithfh.com.

She was born June 27, 1931, in Omaha, Neb., to Armour and Lela Mason Pugh. Loree grew up in Mason City and Clear Lake, spending much of her youth reading, helping to establish a local Girl Scout camp, sailing and teaching swimming.

She received her BA in psychology from Grinnell College and her MFA from the University of Iowa, where her love of language and literature bloomed in the Writers' Workshop. One of Loree's passions was teaching, and she served as an associate professor of English and also the humanities at the University of Northern Iowa from 1966 to 1996.

In 2007, Loree published a memoir, "Love as Always, Kurt – Vonnegut as I Knew Him," which is an examination of her longtime friend, Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.'s, major works of fiction through the lens of his life and the state of the world during the writings. She also contributed to numerous publications regarding Vonnegut's work, published articles on a variety of other topics and served as fiction editor to the North American Review from 1969-1972.

Loree was interested in environmental protection, mythology, Chaos theory, feminism and the humanities. She studied ancient ruins in France, Turkey, Peru and Egypt, sailed the Greek Islands and traveled to places such as Russia, the Galapagos Islands, France and Italy with family and friends. She participated in many professional and community organizations, advocating for respect and fair-mindedness. Another passion was her family and friends.

She is survived by a sister, Lois Larson of Minneapolis, Minn.; five children, Leslie Wilson of Minneapolis, Minn.; Robert T. Wilson III of College Grove, Tenn.; Kevin Rackstraw of Bethesda, Md.; Geoffrey Rackstraw of Bethesda, Md; and Deirdre Moore of Eugene, Ore.; 13 grandchildren; and ten great-grandchildren.