In Loving Memory of Lee Ottman



Lee Ottman, was a much loved SCFOL Board Member and a past SCFOL Volunteer Chairperson. Her renowned sense of humor and ability to make us all laugh will be greatly missed. Aletha "Lee" Grace Ottman died on March 2, 2020, due to complications from pneumonia, at her home in Overland Park, KS. She will be very much missed by all who were graced with her friendship. We send our condolences to her family and friends.

SCFOL will accept donations in memory of Lee, and send a note to her family acknowledging your donation. SCFOL Donation Form

Lee was born on Lister Avenue in Kansas City, MO on November 21, 1926. She graduated from Northeast High School at age 16 and promptly began working at the Army Effects Bureau during the latter stages of World War II. When the war came to a close, she attended Baker University. After college, she moved to Jacksonville, FL to work for National Airlines. Her professional career began in earnest, however, when she went to work for the IBM Corporation in the mid 1950's as a keypunch operator and, ultimately, a programmer of some of the earliest computers that were used to help local Kansas City businesses such as Tension Envelope, Whitaker Cable and Associated Agencies.

When JC Penney opened a regional credit office in 1961, she saw an opportunity to put her computer skills to new use in a career that would ultimately span 25 years and take her to offices in Mission, KS, Echelon, NJ, and Orlando, FL. At Penny's she rose to the role of Media Processing Manager where she succeeded at overcoming challenges and establishing herself as one of only a few female managers at the Company. Her trailblazing efforts and strong belief in mentoring young women at Penny's left a lasting mark on the organization.

In 1986 Lee retired form Penny's and set about traveling the world, a hobby for which she had great passion. "The traveling has been the highlight of my life. If I could do it all over again and start from scratch I would." She toured extensively throughout eastern and western Europe but had a special connection to Germany and France. "But everything pales in comparison to Paris; the Eiffel Tower sets me wild."

Lee also had the privilege of living in several interesting places over the course of her retirement including Palm Springs, CA, San Diego, CA and, ultimately Overland Park, KS. She left her mark as an avid volunteer in each of these cities. She spent many happy hours working at the Palms Springs Airport, Palm Springs Art Museum, and as Friend of the San Diego Library. Her favorite role, however, was as a docent at Mission San Diego de Alcala Catholic Church. She believed her time at the San Diego Mission "could never be duplicated." In Overland Park, she volunteered at the Catholic Charities Thrift Shop, Turn-Styles and at the Overland Park Arboretum. She also became involved with the Builders Sunday School class at the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection and described that experience as phenomenal. "I have never experienced anything like it in all my life."

Lee was a devoted mother who treasured gatherings and celebrations with her family. She recently described her 80th Birthday as the "absolute pinnacle of it all" when a large collection of relatives and friends met her for a dinner in the center of Walt Disney World. She loved her family dearly and believed

that her move back to Overland Park to be closer to loved ones “has been a cocoon that few people will ever have the opportunity to experience with those that they love so much.”

She is survived by three daughters, six grandchildren and seven great grandchildren. Daughters: Kay Tilburg of Overland Park, KS; LeEllen Healey and husband Glenn of Birmingham, MI; Mary Schnell and husband Dennis of Belton, MO. Grandchildren: Michelle Mitchell and husband Justin of Overland Park, KS; Michael Tilburg and wife Vanessa of Esslingen, Germany; Nathan Schnell of Austin, TX; Sean Healey and wife Joanna of Berkley, MI; Laura Ballweg and husband Cody of Middleton, WI; Kristen Merten and husband Mark of Troy, MI. Great Grandchildren: Andrew Mitchell, Katherine Mitchell, Jason Merten, Finn Tilburg, Jack Ballweg, Connor Merten and Hanna Tilburg.

A Celebration of Life Memorial Service will be held on Saturday, March 14th at 2 p.m., in the Wesley Chapel at The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection, 13720 Roe Ave, Leawood, KS 66224. In lieu of flowers the family asks donations be made to: Mission San Diego de Alcala Renovation and Restoration fund in memory of Lee Ottman, 10818 San Diego Mission Road, San Diego, CA 92108. *OR:* The United Methodist Church of the Resurrectio–Memo: Builders in memory of Lee Ottman, 13720 Roe Ave, Leawood, KS 66224.