

Edith Louise (Scharlemann) Rehbein

Edith Rehbein passed away on July 23, 2021, in Redlands, California, of complications from a fall in her New York City apartment in May 2021.

Edith was born September 21, 1943, in St. Louis Missouri, to Martin and Dorothy (Hoyer) Scharlemann. She attended Lutheran High School Central (now North) in St. Louis, and graduated in three years, Magna Cum Laude, from Carleton College, Minnesota, in 1964. She returned to St. Louis and began a graduate program in British Literature at Washington University. There she lived in the family home at Concordia Seminary, where she met David Rehbein, a Seminary student studying to become a Lutheran minister. They married in 1967 and moved to New Jersey for David's first pastoral assignment at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Somerset. Edith found a position teaching English at Middlesex County College (now Middlesex College), New Jersey, where she taught and advised, either full-time or as an adjunct after her official retirement, until 2013.

In 1977 Edith and David moved to a top-floor apartment at the corner of Christopher Street and Waverly in Manhattan's Greenwich Village. In 1980, they joined the Episcopal Church of St. Luke in the Fields (in Manhattan), where Edith became very active in congregational activities, including six years as Senior Warden. After she was widowed in 1994, Edith continued living in Greenwich Village, teaching at Middlesex CC and assisting at St. Luke's.

Her endeavors at St. Luke's were a large and fulfilling part of her life. She had a lovely soprano voice and sang in the choir. She became an usher in order to meet more of the other parishioners, helped establish an early music concert series, served on the Vestry (the committee responsible for the business affairs of the church), and was one of the first lay assistants to distribute the chalice, the ministry dearest to her heart. In 2003 (approx.), she became Senior Warden, serving two 3-year terms until 2009. She continued serving in the parish, including such worldly tasks as food preparation and serving for parish events, until mobility issues around 2016 prevented her from further participation.

Edith loved living in Manhattan and took full advantage of its wonderful (one of her favorite words) cultural opportunities, attending the theater, operas, dance, and concerts, and visiting museums almost continuously. Many winters, she flew to London for its theater season, simply for the love of theater -- and England.

And she read! The Rehbeins had an entire wall of bookshelves in their apartment, from floor to 12-foot ceiling, filled with books. As she became less mobile, she spent much of her time re-reading her favorite books or reading new ones that she continued to acquire.

One of her favorite characterizations of an individual female acquaintance was as a "formidable woman." That was Edith, formidable in appearance, intellect, and demeanor. She enjoyed books with strong female characters, and enjoyed discussing them with students, one of whom commented "she may look calm and quiet on the outside, but be prepared for a fun ride if you're an intelligent student." But she could be softer too, as suggested by the students who described her as "an older woman who is very kind" and a "very sweet lady and very kind."

Edith is survived by her three brothers, Ted (Theresa) of Livermore CA, Martin (Barbara) of Santa Barbara, and John (Sandra) of Redlands