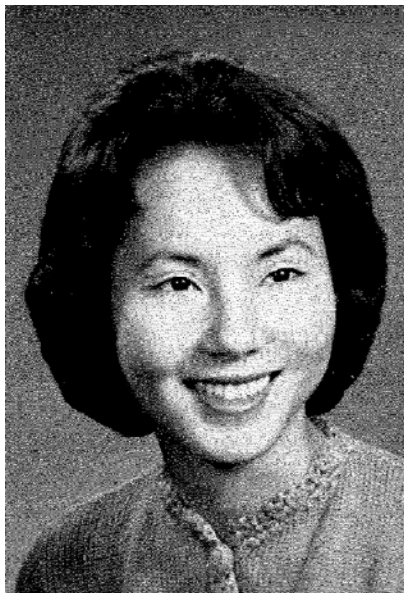


Hamamoto, Susan Tokiko (December 8, 1939—July 24, 2018)



Susan Tokiko Hamamoto followed her sister (Amy Hamamoto Faulconer, '59) to Grinnell, arriving just as the college re-opened the renovated Mears as a freshman residence hall. As a relatively small group (28 freshmen plus 4 upperclassmen as president and baffleboard), those who were denizens of Mears Hall considered themselves special. Susie herself returned to Mears as president during her senior year, and in such capacity also served on the AWS governing board of women's hall presidents.

The class of '64 Mears girls loved Susie. Jill Welch comments, "Susie was the perfect freshman mentor: gentle, kind, fun-loving, welcoming. I don't think she had a mean bone in her body." Anne Hart Cleghorn adds that Susie's "door was always open. She made my first year of college feel very comfortable. And, she was so darn cute!!"

Though born on Kauai, Susie considered herself a native of the Big Island. She attended schools in Hilo, Hawaii, and graduated from Hilo High in 1957. She stayed in touch with friends there, and returned often to visit family and to attend reunions.

At Grinnell, Susie was a member of the Iowa State Education Association and the math club. She made the most of her summers away from Grinnell, studying one year at the University of Hawaii, and working another in a lab at the University of Colorado. She graduated from Grinnell with a major in Biology. Diploma in hand, Susie moved on to Brown University where in 1963 she earned her M.S. in Biology.

Having a true pioneer wanderlust, Susie then headed to Germany to teach for a year at the Frankfurt International School. Taking advantage of her location, she traveled extensively in Europe.

Returning to the United States, Susie worked in various research capacities, first in Hawaii, later in the San Francisco Bay Area. In the Department of Microbiology at the University of Hawaii, she served as a research associate in electron microscopy. Later, she worked for the Department of Pathology at the University of California Medical Center in San Francisco, and finally at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute in a biochemistry lab at the University of California, Berkeley.

Susie was a kind and loving soul who made friends wherever she went. She loved to cook and to enjoy a glass of wine with friends. She loved the out-of-doors and hence her garden. An avid runner and hiker, Susie finished the Honolulu marathon and climbed Kilimanjaro, did yoga at Machu Pichu and paddled San Francisco Bay in her sea kayak. She was an active member of the Oakland Buddhist Temple and the Orinda Hiking Club. She is mourned by an extended family, including her remaining sister and family, the family of her older sister, and an extended family both on the mainland (as they say in Hawaii) and in the 50th state.

Nancy Welch Barnby (herself a Mears girl in 1957-58)