



## Alice Block

November 29, 1937 - October 28, 2015

Alice McCombe Block

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After a long illness, Alice McCombe Block passed peacefully with her husband of over 50 years at her side.

Alice was born and grew up in Waukesha, WI. Her loving parents were Charlotte and James McCombe. She received her BS degree in Education from Maryville College, a small Presbyterian liberal arts college located near Knoxville, TN. Alice's first teaching position was in Grand Rapids, MI. She moved to Madison, WI and taught fifth grade in the suburb of Sun Prairie. She enjoyed teaching fifth grade because she found that the students took an active part in their learning. Alice also began working on her Master's degree at the University of Wisconsin. Her thesis project involved having her fifth grade students tape record interviews with descendants of pioneer families. While at the university, she attended the University Presbyterian Church (Pres House), where she met her future husband, John, who was a graduate student in medicinal chemistry. They married in December 1964. With their new degrees, the couple moved to Corvallis in September 1966.

Initially, Alice did substitute teaching, but, with the birth of her first child, she became a stay-at-home mom. Her many activities focused around her children and evolved as they grew older. At the First Presbyterian Church, she taught Sunday school and was on the Board of Deacons. In the latter capacity, she represented the church on the ecumenical Voluntary Interfaith Caregivers. Alice held different positions with Presbyterian Women including Program Chair and Moderator, and she was named a National Honorary Life Member. Alice attended several Presbyterian Women triennial national meetings. Because of son Alan, she was a Cub Scout den mother, den mother coach and day camp director. Because of daughters Bonnie and Charlotte, Alice was a Brownie and Girl Scout leader, day camp director, Council Program Committee Chair and successful grant writer to fund campership scholarships.

Another focus of her service was the OSU Folk Club. Alice was Scholarship Chair, Program Co-Chair, Secretary, President, Historian and OSU Folk Club Thrift Shop volunteer including Friday Morning Shift Captain and Board member. Throughout all of these volunteer activities, she focused on development of youth and their appreciation of and interaction with our diverse world communities. This led to Alice's intensive involvement with American Field Service (AFS), a world-wide high school exchange program established to bring about peace through international understanding at the grass roots level. Alice and John hosted students from Germany and Denmark before Charlotte spent a year in Denmark. Alice served as the annual AFS Fund-Raiser Dessert Chair for several years, Corvallis Chapter President for over 10 years and AFS Pacific-Cascades Area Council Area Hosting Coordinator for several years. She facilitated the placement of eight high school students from Uzhhorod, Ukraine, Corvallis' Sister City.

Alice has received much recognition for her volunteer accomplishments. Perhaps she valued most being one of three finalists in 2003 for Corvallis Senior First Citizen. One of Alice's greatest enjoyments was travel, beginning shortly after the end of WW II when her parents took her to Northern Ireland and the farm where her father was raised. She made sure that John and the children joined her on some of these trips. She remained in close contact with her family in Northern Ireland and enjoyed sharing her Irish heritage with others. Other travels included Japan, Western Europe, Russia, Panama and Costa Rica. Alice is survived by her husband, John, and children Alan, Bonnie (Frank) Howarth and Charlotte plus two grandchildren Calvin and Claire Howarth.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made in Alice's name to Benton County Hospice Service, OSU Folk Club Thrift Shop Scholarship Fund or Presbyterian Women Missions in care of the First Presbyterian Church. A memorial service celebrating Alice's life will be at 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 12, in the sanctuary of the First Presbyterian Church, 114 SW 8th St, Corvallis. Please share your thoughts and memories for the family at [www.demosdurdan.com](http://www.demosdurdan.com).

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

NOV 12. 2:00 PM (PT)

First Presbyterian Church  
114 SE 8th Street  
Corvallis, OR 97333

# Tribute Wall

MA

“ Back in 1967 Alice and I both belonged to a church circle at First Presbyterian here in Corvallis that went by the sedate name of Junior Matrons. It was on the way home from one of these meetings that I confided to her that I was pregnant. It turned out she was pregnant, too, and we had practically the same due date in September! Alice, who was always on top of things, had her baby Alan a few days early. My daughter Karen was late. She is three weeks younger than Alan. Those were three long weeks!

Over the years that followed, Alice and I had parallel lives. Sunday School teaching, Brownie and Girl Scout leaders, and hosting an AFS student. But I have to admit that in all these activities I lagged behind Alice when it came to dedication and efficiency. Take Girl Scouts for example: while I was never anything more than a slightly frazzled troupe leader, Alice went on to be a day camp director, Council Program Committee Chair and to write grants to fund camper scholarships. In 1980 our family hosted an AFS student from Japan, and I continued to take an interest in AFS by dutifully attending the annual Fund-Raiser Desserts. Whereas Alice's family hosted two students, one from Germany and another from Denmark, and then Alice went on to organize the annual Fund-Raiser Desserts, was president of the Corvallis AFS chapter for 10 years and the Hosting Coordinator for the Pacific-Cascades Area.

I admired Alice for her tenacity and her dedication to her many volunteer commitments. But what I admired most was her quiet humility. She could lead without dominating. She was kind and sincere. She earned everyone's respect and love.

Margaret Anderson

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Margaret Anderson - November 13, 2015 at 11:01 AM

MA

“ Dear John and Family,  
I was saddened to read that Alice had passed away. As others have written, she was an inspiration to all. She worked tirelessly in both the Corvallis AFS chapter and in our area. I was always made to feel comfortable in your home and remember her impeccable organization. She definitely always covered all the bases.  
With love to you all, Mary and John Armes

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Mary Armes - November 10, 2015 at 08:57 PM

TW

“ Dear John and family,

*I was so sorry to hear that Alice has passed on. I worked with Alice as a volunteer in AFS and learned so much from her. She was always an inspiration to me with her dedication to the students and families and making sure everyone had a good experience. She was also incredible at getting people to volunteer! She will be missed. Our thoughts are with you.*

*Tina Withrow-Robinson  
Corvallis*

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**Tina Withrow-Robinson** - November 10, 2015 at 01:53 PM

BH

“ Dear John and family,

*I am sorry to hear about your loss. Alice was a wonderful person. She leaves a legacy of kindness and friendship that transcend countries and cultures. She will be missed around the globe.*

*Bunyod (Uzbekistan)*

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**Bunyod Holmatov** - November 09, 2015 at 04:31 AM

LB

“ As a member of the same class at Maryville College, with the same major, I was happy that I ended up living in the same town as Alice from 1972-1985. I am very sorry to hear of her death. She lived a good life caring for her family and others.

*Louise Pratt Bollman*

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**Louise Bollman** - November 07, 2015 at 12:23 AM

NM

“ We met Alice through our involvement with American Field Service (AFS). She dedicated many hours to keeping the Corvallis AFS Chapter thriving so that we could bring youth from other cultures here and send our own youth abroad, building bridges of understanding in hopes of enhancing world peace. She leaves a legacy of love and increased international understanding. That is quite a legacy. Thank you, Alice. Our condolences to John and the family.

*Masa and Nancy Matsumoto*

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**Nancy Matsumoto** - November 06, 2015 at 01:24 PM

DG

“ RIP, Alice. A wonderful woman, a wonderful life, a twinkle in the eye of God.

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**David/Lynn Grube** - November 04, 2015 at 10:30 AM

BH

“ Alice brought us into the AFS family when she called us about hosting Lada, a girl from Uzhhorod, Ukraine in 2002. I remember being touched by Alice. She was so kind and gracious. I also remember her as very enthusiastic, capable, and passionate about the opportunities and mission of AFS and it's vision to understand and embrace all peoples and cultures. Thirteen years later, Lada and her family remain very dear to us and Alice remains an inspiration to me. I feel very fortunate to have been touched by her spirit and wish both she and her family deep abiding peace. Bonnie Helpenstell

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**Bonnie Helpenstell** - November 03, 2015 at 07:10 PM

JH

“ I have so many happy memories of holidays spent with Alice (as well as John, Charlotte, and Bonnie). I'm sad it won't ever be again like it was. Alice, you were a great woman.

-- Jason Hunter

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**Jason Hunter** - November 03, 2015 at 10:25 AM

MC

“ John, Allan, Bonnie and Charlotte - Dave and I are sorry to hear this sad news. Though we have lived and traveled in many places since living just up the street from you in Corvallis, we have not forgotten this wonderful family. May she rest in peace, knowing that her family loved her and cared for her in the best possible way.

Mary Lou and Dave Carlson

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**Mary Lou Carlson** - November 03, 2015 at 02:57 AM

BZ

“ I am very sad to read the notice in the 1955 Waukesha High School web site that our special classmate Alice McCombe Block has passed away. Alice was always a very special gal. Her smiles and wisdom touching many lives in Waukesha as well as the other towns, and states that she eventually moved to. In reading Alice's obituary I wished so badly that Alice would have shared her Bio in the classmate page that our web-master had created.....If Alice's family would send this bio to Geo Winkler giving him permission to post it, that would certainly be a tribute to her, to her family, and to her '55 classmates. I remember Alice from our H.S. days. I also knew her Mother Charlotte from working at Avalon Manor, I feel blessed that they both touched my life. Alice will be missed, even though her life was far from Waukesha, she is remembered with admiration. Barbara Gross Zimmerman class of '55 Waukesha HS.

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**Barbara M. Zimmerman** - November 02, 2015 at 09:40 PM

PF

“ Dear John and family  
I was so very sorry to see the notice in the Gazette Times. Alice will long be remembered - as well as your compassionate care-giving, John. She was a wonderful person and will be missed.  
With deep sorrow  
Pete Fullerton  
peteful@msn.com

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**Pete Fullerton** - November 02, 2015 at 08:17 AM

JW

“ John and family - Jack and I are so sorry for your loss. Alice was, indeed, a special person. I enjoyed working with Alice on various church-associated events and other functions through the years. Our thoughts and prayers are with you all.  
JoAnne Walstad

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**JoAnne Walstad** - October 31, 2015 at 06:16 PM

JS

“ Alice is remembered with reverence for her timeless efforts on behalf of AFS and the students/world it serves. We remember a wonderful hike with Alice and her daughter along the Opal Creek trail. We also remember Alice at recent AFS desserts and OSU Folk Club events.

John and Mary Dean Snelling

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**John Snelling** - October 31, 2015 at 11:34 AM

TS

“ *John & family,*

*I am so sorry to read about Alice's death. What a special woman she was...she touched many people. my thoughts & prayers are with you. Tammy Skubinna*

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**Tammy Skubinna** - October 30, 2015 at 06:24 PM

PH

“ *John and family...I'm so sorry for your loss. You are in my thoughts and prayers.*

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**Patricia Hollenbeck** - October 29, 2015 at 10:00 PM