

## Kathleen Egerton Harkey of Nashville, Tennessee | 1946 - 2023 | Obituary



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### **Memorial Service (/obituary/kathleen-harkey#serviceinfo)**

Saturday, Jun 24, 2023

11:00 AM

## Kathleen Egerton Harkey

September 2, 1946 - June 2, 2023

by Kathleen Egerton

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Kathleen Egerton Harkey passed away on June 2, 2023, at the age of 76, after a long illness. She is survived by her husband of 54 years, John Harkey, her son Wil Harkey and his wife Papri Harkey and her daughter Kate Kenney and her husband Chris Kenney, and her five grandchildren Weston, Benny, Emerson, Ellie and Morgan. Her family is eternally grateful for all the unconditional love and support she provided throughout her life.

Kathleen was born in Louisville, KY, September 2, 1946. Her family moved to Alabama, briefly living in Wedowee before landing in Birmingham at the age of 2. Through the experience of growing up in Birmingham in the 1950s and 60s and the friendships she forged at the United Methodist church, she realized early in her life she had a passion for social advocacy. Kathleen reluctantly went to Auburn, following her mother's path, and majored in Home Economics. She later earned a Masters in Human Development from the University of Alabama and an MBA from Vanderbilt University.

Following graduation from Auburn, Kathleen married John Harkey, an Air Force Academy graduate. After John's tour of duty in Vietnam, they moved to Nashville where John went to graduate school at Vanderbilt and Kathleen took a job as education director at Planned Parenthood. Her subsequent career included Director of Development at the Nashville public television station, and following her interest in art, she later became manager of a team of artists that developed slide presentations for corporate clients.

After Kate and Wil arrived, Kathleen began her public education advocacy. She helped form Cooperative Child Care as a not-for-profit, educationally oriented day care center with parents as the board of directors. She also started working with several people to bring the Paideia concept, a program that emphasized quality and equity in education, to Nashville. In 2000, she successfully ran for Metro Nashville School Board and served until 2006. She was incredibly proud and grateful for the opportunity to help improve the quality of education for so many children in Nashville.

Though she grew up in the Methodist Church, she switched to the Unitarian Universalist Church as an adult. She took an active role in the church in Nashville and served as president of the congregation in 1993 during a challenging time. In recent years she has continued her involvement with Planned Parenthood. She also became involved with Moms Demand Action, a group advocating for better approaches to reducing gun violence.

In 2018 she was diagnosed with Corticobasal Degeneration, a neurological disorder that progressively limited her ability to walk, talk, and write, though her mind remained sharp. Her loving husband remained her primary caregiver through the end.

Her life has now ended, but not her impact on the world. That is carried on through her children, her friends, and the organizations she worked with. In lieu of flowers, please consider giving to the Nashville YWCA, an organization focused on helping young women and girls desire to create a better quality of life for themselves and their families: [www.ywcanashville.com](http://www.ywcanashville.com) (<https://www.ywcanashville.com>).

The Memorial service will be at Scarritt Bennett, at 11AM on Saturday, June 24, 2023. Please RSVP if planning to attend with this link: <https://forms.gle/d88quu1M9xCXiWWo7> (<https://forms.gle/d88quu1M9xCXiWWo7>)

Please sign the Guestbook for the family.

Crawford Funeral Home, (615) 254-8200

## SERVICES

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### Memorial Service

Saturday, June 24, 2023


11:00 AM

*Scarritt Bennett*

1027 18th Avenue South

Nashville, TN 37212

[Get Directions on Google Maps \(\)](#)

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