



SARA HOFFMAN (SALLY)

January 6, 2015

SARA WITHEROW HOFFMAN (SALLY)

Sara Witherow Hoffman, PhD, died peacefully on December 19, 2014 at the University

of Florida Shands Hospital in Gainesville, FL. Sally was born September 1, 1943 to

Richard Thompson Hoffman and Marguerite Kinser Hoffman in Alexandria, LA. She was

a 1961 graduate of East High School in Memphis, TN. In 1966, Sally graduated with

Honors with a BS in Physics from Southwestern at Memphis (now Rhodes College).

She was the first woman to earn a degree in Physics from Southwestern at Memphis. In

1968, she earned her Masters of Science from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville

followed by her Doctorate in Physics and Astronomy from the University of Florida in

Gainesville, Florida.

Sally was a Professor of Astronomy and Physical Sciences at Santa Fe College in

Gainesville for 40 continuous years from 1974 until her death. It was Sally's goal to

have a state-of-the-art planetarium built on the Santa Fe Campus, and she was instrumental in the development of the Kika Silva Pla Planetarium which now serves the College and all of Gainesville. Sally enjoyed organizing outdoor astronomy viewing events for the public throughout the year and was an active member of several Astronomy and Physical Sciences organizations.

She is survived by her brother, Richard T. Hoffman, Jr. and his wife, Elizabeth Mims Hoffman of Collierville, TN; her nephew, Richard T. Hoffman III, and his wife, Sarah Shepard Hoffman; and a great nephew, Brooks Shepard Hoffman, all of San Rafael, CA.

Plans for a memorial service in Gainesville are incomplete. The family requests any memorials be made to Santa Fe College, 3000 NW 83rd St, Gainesville, FL 32606 or to Church of the Holy Communion (Episcopal) at 4546 Walnut Grove Rd, Memphis, TN 38117.

Tribute Wall

CN

“ *It has been 8 years since my beloved Sally 's passing. My love for her however has not diminished a single bit il pray we will have adjacent apartments in in Gods Holy City!*

*Love you Sally,
Carl*

Carl Nuckolls - September 19, 2022 at 03:07 AM

CA

“Sally was my first girlfriend when we both attended Southwestern at Memphis. We met at a fraternity gathering, and it was love at first sight. We both were physics majors. Sally was a straight A student in physics and math, but I was more of the C type. Sally was 2 years ahead of me. She had a photographic memory and told me she often dreamed in colors. Our "romantic" phone calls usually included her helping me with my physics problems. She could remember the solutions to problems she worked 2 years prior of the top of her head! We were both interested in astronomy. She also became interested in ham radio, a hobby of mine, and later got her novice license. I was so attracted to her because, not only was she attractive and had had a great personality, she was the smartest girl at our college!

Our head physics professor at Southwestern was pretty male chauvinist and liked to strongly discourage women from majoring in physics. Sally persevered in the face of all this and became the first woman to graduate with a major in physics from Southwestern. When she went to the University Of Tennessee for her Master's studies, we communicated by phone and letters while I remained at Southwestern finishing my undergraduate degree. Her hand writing was beautiful. I still remember one of her letters so clearly. After all the mushy stuff, she included at the end of her letter a derivation of the classic rocket equation physics problem, since she knew I was having trouble with that. I must be the only guy in the world to get a love letter from his girlfriend with the derivation of the rocket equation at the end! I have told this amazing story to many of my friends over the years.

Later when I graduated Southwestern, I followed her to the University of Tennessee to get my electrical engineering degree. We were both in the same large apartment building, Shelbourne Towers. Her brother Rich was there also for a year. I can remember our "big dates". Sally would come up to my roommate John and my apartment, and we would all study, study study. My roommate and I worked our engineering homework problems, while Sally sat on our

couch working her physics problems. Having her to study with us helped break the monotony of the seeming endless supply of homework.

Sally went on to the University of Florida for her PhD studies and we parted company after that, but remained friends, communicating ever so often. However, she was so wonderful I never could forget her in our 40 years apart. We communicated by email on various astronomical events in the past 2 years and reminisced old times. I know God has given us different gifts, and Sally's were math, teaching and astronomy. Her students and colleagues at Sante Fe were so lucky to have her. Although she didn't have children of her own, the many students she inspired over her career have become her great legacy.

In John 13:13, Jesus says " You call me teacher...and rightly so, for that is what I am"! Sally has followed Jesus example and used her gifts to teach her students the beauty of math and the physical universe God created. Thank you God for Sally's life, and the blessings she bestowed on all of us. I know we are all looking forward to being with her again in heaven. Until then we will treasure our wonderful memories of our time with her...

Carl - January 18, 2015 at 03:32 PM

CR

“ *Here's to Ralphie, girl physics major. She will be remembered with fondness by many.*

Charles Robertson - January 14, 2015 at 07:17 PM

JL

“ Dear Family,
I am so sorry to hear of your great sadness. I know that death is a very hard thing to comprehend. I have experienced this moment of sadness. I and many others have wondered why this has happened when we lose our love ones in the sleep of death. It is only natural to want to see your love one again. Wouldn't you agree? Many have found comfort in the Bible's promise of a resurrection. Who will be resurrected? Jesus said that : "All those in the memorial tombs will hear his (Jesus) voice and come out." (JOHN 5:28,29) Yes, God really will defeat our enemy death and it will be gone forever! (ISAIAH 25:8)What such a marvelous hope we have.
Sincerely Yours, Judy L.

Judy L. - January 13, 2015 at 02:21 PM

AH

“ God Bless You, Sally Hoffman. You have gone to be with the stars. Thank you for all you have done for Alachua Astronomy Club. You will be deeply missed.

Andy Howell - January 12, 2015 at 03:23 AM