

Catherine E. Hackney, Ph.D.



Dr. Catherine E. Hackney, of Naples, formerly of Hudson, Ohio, passed away due to pancreatic cancer on December 28, 2024. Cathy was born as Catherine Ann Szabo in Elyria, Ohio to Goldie A. Szabo and Alexander J. Szabo on January 22, 1949. She graduated from Kent State University and obtained her master's degree from Cleveland State University and her doctoral degree from Georgia State University.

She is survived by her loving husband, James R. Hackney, son Matthew P. Brand and daughter-in-law Wawa Minhat-Brand, niece Danielle M. Szabo, great niece Laila M. Szabo, nephew Shawn T. Szabo, step-daughter Gail L. Ford, and granddaughters Melissa R. Anziano and Elizabeth S. Bays.

She was predeceased by her parents and her brother, Thomas A. Szabo. Cathy remains in the memory of many friends and former students.

To know Cathy was to experience love in action. Cathy's compassion and sparkling personality touched those who knew her, from family members to colleagues to health care and service providers. Throughout her career as school principal, professor, and higher education administrator, she exemplified the exceptional leadership that she wrote about and taught. Cathy had a unique ability to generate collaborative discussions, to recognize multiple viewpoints, and to nourish collective action.

Cathy retired from Kent State University as Professor of Leadership Studies and Associate Dean of Administrative Affairs and Graduate Education. She held national offices in the American Council on Education and the American Educational Research Association. She served as Secretary of the Kent State University Foundation Board until 2023. Cathy was Dean of Graduate Studies at Ursuline College, Cleveland. Her professional career supported her work with women leaders in the US, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. Insights gained through this work informed her book, *Leading from a Feminist Soul*. Cathy was a member of the Advisory Board of the KSU Women's Center and President of the Board of Trustees for Our Lady of the Elms School, Akron.

In Naples, Cathy served two terms as President of the Greater Naples AAUW Charitable Foundation, Inc, an affiliate of the American Association of University Women. She was an active participant in several committees of the Greater Naples Branch. She was 1st Vice President of the League of Women Voters of Collier County and a key member of the Reproductive Health; Education; and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committees. Cathy had a genius for organizing events and inspiring collaborative action. Her intelligence and sense of humor pervaded her work.

In addition to her volunteer activities and time with friends, Cathy enjoyed decorating, reading, politics, gardening, singing, opera, and playing with her beloved cat Callie and dog Lucy. Cathy loved her red convertible, fashion, and creative hairstyles. For fun, she was a founding member of the KSU chapter of the Martini Sisters and a charter member of Gardenia Ladies Club of Naples.

A memorial service for Cathy will be held in spring, 2025. Contributions in her memory may be made to the Catherine E. Hackney Endowed Scholarship Fund, and sent to the Greater Naples AAUW Charitable Foundation, PO Box 9742, Naples Florida, 34101 or through the webpage: <https://greater-naples-fl.aauw.net/greater-naples-aauw-charitable-foundation/>. All donors should click on the yellow “donate” button and enter “Hackney Fund” in the notes section of the donation form that next opens.