



Ruth C. Holznagel

April 15, 2024

Ruth Courtright Holznagel died April 7, 2024, at her home at Judson Park in Cleveland, Ohio, after a brief illness. She was 91. She spent her last days in hospice care with her family around her. Ruth was born on the family farm in Oregon's Grand Ronde Valley on Oct. 7, 1932, the youngest of six children of Gilbert Courtright and Grace Allen Courtright. She attended a one-room schoolhouse, Willowdale School, before graduating from La Grande High School in 1949 at age 16. While attending Eastern Oregon College of Education she married Don McKee, and overcame his untimely death nine months later to earn her bachelor's degree in 1953. She married fellow EOCE student Bob Holznagel in 1954, and they remained happily married for 64 years. Elementary teaching was Ruth's calling. She taught at Prescott School in Parkrose and then, after a break to raise her two sons, at Central School in Forest Grove. She delighted in teaching Oregon history. Along with lessons about early settlers and statehood, activities to encourage respect for Indigenous people were annual events in her 4th-grade classroom. Ruth was a natural musician who learned to play the piano, organ, and French horn as a girl. She sang in a trio in college, and she and Bob were choir members for many years at Forest Grove United Church of Christ. She played for many a singalong at the holidays, at gatherings of friends, and sometimes simply while dinner was simmering. She was in the cast of the Theater in the Grove's very first show, "South Pacific," in 1969. Ruth and Bob lived in their home on Main Street in Forest Grove for more than 50 years. It was the site of many

holiday dinners, reunions, cast parties, card games by the fire, and gatherings of neighborhood kids for games of Wiffle ball, basketball, ping-pong and pool. Ruth was a neighbor-maker who knew everyone on her street and loved to stop and chat. Her applesauce and strawberry jam were family favorites, and her garden was always cheerful. Ruth and Bob loved to travel in the American west, and drove most of the state and rural highways west of the Rockies. In retirement they took their golf clubs and played as the fancy struck them. When their kids were young, the family went camping at Cape Lookout, Oswald West, Fort Stevens, and on trips to destinations such as Yellowstone and Glacier parks. Ruth was active in the PEO philanthropic sorority all her adult life, belonging first to a chapter in Parkrose and then to Chapter DJ in Forest Grove. The year before her death she told her life story in a long-distance video program for Chapter DJ. Ruth was the family historian and delighted in collecting letters and photos from generations past. Among her favorite projects was preserving letters her parents had written to each other as teenagers, from 1914 to 1918. She highlighted those letters in talks she gave in Forest Grove and Cleveland, titled "Still Loving You So Hard Like a Mule Would Kick." The original letters are now at the Oregon Historical Society in Portland. Ruth and Bob also researched and wrote historical dialogues featuring Forest Grove founders Harvey Clark and Tabitha Brown, which they performed with gusto ?? and in costume ?? at schools, clubs, and civic and church gatherings. Somewhat like Tabitha Brown, Ruth made a big move in her later years, to Hans's town of Cleveland in 2020 after 88 years as a resident of Oregon. She lived in the Judson Park retirement center, attended Archwood UCC online, and adopted the Guardians and Cavaliers as her new sports teams. Ruth is survived by her sons, Hans Holznagel (Kathryn Harlow) of Cleveland, Ohio, and Ryan "Fritz" Holznagel (Julie Corwin) of Somerville, Mass.; her sister-in-law, Jean Holznagel, of Portland; her brother-in-law, Gary Holznagel, of Hillsboro; grandchildren, Clifton Holznagel of Portland and Alyssa (David) Holzkloos of Cleveland; and many nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by Bob in 2018, along with her parents Grace and

Gilbert Courtright and her five brothers and sisters: Phyllis, Allen, Betty, Bernice, and Burr. A Memorial Service and reception for Ruth will be held at 2 p.m. PDT Saturday, June 1, 2024 at Forest Grove United Church of Christ. Private interment will be at Fir Lawn Memorial Park in Hillsboro. For those wishing to make memorial donations, the family suggests Forest Grove UCC (fgucc.org), P.E.O. (peointernational.org), or Friends of Historic Forest Grove (fhfg.org).