



Rosalie May Smith

August 21, 1934 - June 27, 2026

Rosalie May Smith—beloved mother, grandmother, scientist, volunteer, traveler, and friend—passed away peacefully on June 27, 2026, in Fort Collins, Colorado, at the age of 91. She moved through the world with a gentle steadiness, a deep reverence for nature, and a gift for finding joy in life’s simplest moments.

Born on August 21, 1934, in Seattle, Washington, to Wesley and May Smith, Rosalie grew up alongside her sister Doris and brother Don. She graduated from Stanford University in 1956 with a degree in Physical Therapy and married soon after. Over the next decade, Rosalie welcomed five children—Ken, Christine, Doug, and twins Kathy and Greg. She was divorced in 1980.

In her mid-forties, guided by her love of plants and the natural world, Rosalie returned to school to earn a master’s degree in Botany from Colorado State University in the early 1980s. She worked as a bus driver for Care A Van while her youngest 3 children completed Jr. High and High School. In 1990, Rosalie joined the Peace Corps and spent 2½ years in Thailand working in plant protection—an experience that deepened her appreciation for cultural exchange, service, and the interconnectedness of all living things. After returning to Colorado, she continued her botanical work with the Center for Environmental Management of Military Lands (CEMML) at CSU into the mid 1990s.

When her time at CEMML ended, Rosalie embraced a role that brought her immense joy: caring for children as “Granny Smith.” She nurtured many little ones with the same warmth, patience, and playful spirit she had shared with her own children—often singing songs, telling stories, and delighting in their discoveries.

Rosalie found great joy in being outdoors. A lifelong hiker and downhill skier, she delighted in introducing others to the beauty of the natural world. Friends fondly recall that no hike with Rosalie was complete without pausing to identify wildflowers. She became the unofficial botanist of her hiking group, sharing her knowledge with anyone willing to slow down and look closely. She hiked with that group for more than twenty years and cherished the companionship of a dinner group that gathered faithfully for over forty.

Adventure was woven throughout her life. She traveled widely—to Japan, China, France, Austria, the Netherlands, Nepal, and beyond. She rafted through the Grand Canyon, joined Elderhostel learning adventures, bicycled through eastern Washington, and, with her family, welcomed many international exchange students into her home.

Rosalie also loved music and theatre, and she shared that love generously. She attended performances at the Fort Collins Lincoln Center and Bas Bleu Theatre, and she was rarely without a song to offer any nearby child—nursery rhymes and playful tunes that sparked smiles and laughter.

In addition to her Peace Corps service, Rosalie volunteered with Crossroads Safehouse, Bright Beginnings, Ft. Collins CASA, and the Northern Colorado Food Bank.

Rosalie will be remembered for her intelligence, adventurous spirit, boundless curiosity, and generous heart. She lived with graceful simplicity—finding

beauty in a single blossom, joy in a child's laughter, and meaning in helping others.

She is survived by her children, Ken Basye (Debbie Merrill), Christine Moritz (Tom), Doug Basye (Hong Liang), Kathy Capron (Shane), and Greg Basye (Aimee); her grandchildren, Lisa Moritz, Aaron Basye, Allison Basye, Lauren Basye, Reese Basye, Graham Capron, and Amelia Capron; as well as extended family and many dear friends whose lives were brightened by her kindness, humor, and unwavering love of nature.

Her family invites those who knew Rosalie to honor her memory by taking a walk in the mountains, identifying a wildflower, welcoming someone from another culture, or volunteering in their community—simple acts that beautifully reflect the way she lived.

The family extends heartfelt gratitude to the caregivers at Collinwood Memory Care and Seniors Helping Seniors, and to the friends and loved ones who supported Rosalie in her final days. A celebration of her life will be announced at a later date. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to a conservation organization, volunteer program, or charitable cause that reflects Rosalie's lifelong commitment to service, education, and the natural world.