



## Rachel S. Henderson

July 2, 1938 - December 30, 2020

died Wednesday, December 30, 2020, in Paw Paw, Michigan. Rachel was born in Augusta, Maine, on July 2, 1938, to Everett and Bertha Henderson.

Rachel was predeceased by her parents.

She is survived by her twin sister Deborah Davis and husband Roger; nephew, Dean Davis, and wife Teresa; nieces, Rae Folsom and husband David, and Mary Alexander and husband Daniel, and great-nephews Carter and Ryan Davis, Spencer and great-niece Molly Folsom, and Jacob and Brady Alexander. All from Maine.

Rachel grew up in Michigan, where she attended the Galesburg schools and high school at the Putney School in Vermont. Rachel graduated from Lake Erie College in Ohio. She finished her teaching degree at Western Michigan University and worked as an elementary school teacher in Gobles for 38 years. Rachel spent many summers in Camden, Maine working at the family bookstore, The Dolphin Bookstore. Rachel loved her Lord and was a member of Riverside Christian Church in Grand Rapids.

Rachel also volunteered at the Meadow Woods Nursing Home in activities work in Bloomingdale, MI. She taught residents to read, helped with gardening projects, and assisted with activities. The Health Care Association of Michigan even selected Rachel in 2009 to receive the "Volunteer of the Year" award for

the State of Michigan. Pretty cool!

Rachel was passionate about reading and donated books each year to the Gobles Elementary school and some families. Rachel even was an encyclopedia salesperson in the Gobles areas

The family would like to extend a special thank you to the Maple Lake Assisted Care Staff and to Effie Koehn, Karen Hronke, and Jill Dustin for their many years of friendship, care, and support that they provided Rachel.

Graveside services will take place on Tuesday, January 5, 2021, at 1 pm at Robinson Cemetery, in Gobles with the Pastor Gary Napp officiating. The family request in lieu of flowers, please make memorial contributions to either the Riverside Christian Church in Grand Rapids, MI, Gobles Elementary School Reading Program, or the Alzheimer's Association. Arrangements entrusted to the Gobles Chapel, D.L. Miller Funeral Home, [www.dlmillerfuneralhome.com](http://www.dlmillerfuneralhome.com)

# Cemetery Details

## Robinson Cemetery

34000 20th Avenue  
Gobles, MI

# Previous Events

## Graveside

JAN 5. 1:00 PM (ET)

Robinson Cemetery  
34000 20th Avenue  
Gobles, MI

# Tribute Wall

RO

“ We bought a World Book encyclopedia set the summer before I had her as my teacher. She was one of my favorite teachers and I am sad to see she is no longer around. I still have a book you gave me... "Where The Sidewalk Ends," and read poems to my children from it. I recently moved back to the area a few years ago and always hoped to see her at the grocery or around town, but never did. I'll never forget you Ms. Henderson.

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**Rosemary** - January 08, 2021 at 12:34 AM

PI

“ I remember being terrified to enter her classroom the first time. I'd been told she was a rough teacher. One of her greatest pet peeves was bubble gum. I was sure I was in big trouble the one time I forgot. I managed to hide it, but she knew. I knew she knew. I was already an avid reader in 6th grade, but she inspired the poet in me for the first time. She introduced me to Shel Silverstein, whom is still one of my favorites today. She built my imagination even greater than it was and I used that to make it through things that I couldn't have borne without her inspiration. Later, I looked forward to seeing her at Old Hacienda Perez. She was a regular there and it was joyful to see her in a new way from the terror I'd first had of her class. She helped to inspire my children with the American Girl books that she so generously donated to so many students. They still adorn my bookshelves. Rachel Henderson, you will be greatly missed in our community. You cried the day the space shuttle crashed. We lost a pioneer teacher that day. We've lost another this day. You will be greatly missed. May God take special care of you now until we meet again. 💜🕊️💜

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**Piecesofprecious** - January 07, 2021 at 11:10 AM

HS

“ Sadly, we are saying goodbye to one of the most thoughtful, caring woman of education in our area! Ms. Rachel Henderson taught both my husband and son during her 38 year career, deeply influencing both. During an extremely difficult time in my life, the loss of my father; I was a parent volunteer in her class. After months of just sitting in my grief, she phoned me. Insinuating that she must have a parent conference regarding Dallis, she demanded to meet with me at the end of the day. Living across from the school I really didn't have any excuse, my son was having issues. I dragged myself up off the floor, the couch, the bed...I showered,dressed and walked my seering depression across the street. I sat at a table in her class waiting for her to come in from the hallway. She sat across from me and said Where have you been? I said at home! Well I know that she replied! That's where your physical self has been! But where have you been? She then proceeded to tell me how she knows my father died in October but it is now near April. That the woman she met in August is not the woman she sees before her and that she could see that in my son! That by wallowing in my own sorrow is costing my children, my husband and my family and that although she knows that wasn't my intent that this is whats happening! She then proceeded to ask me when I intended to get up? I must've looked so confused! She proceeds to tell me to "get up, go home, take care of your family, catch up on your house and I will see you on Monday!" I needed that forward, tough love in that moment! Thank you Ms Henderson! Rest in Peace hun!



Heather

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Heather Shepard - January 05, 2021 at 10:54 PM

JT

“ Our dear Rachel was a longtime friend of myself, my wife Karole, and our church, Riverside Christian Church in Grand Rapids. Rachel was a real blessing both to our church body and to individual families. All the time we knew Rachel she lived in Gobles which made it difficult to be with us for every service, but we knew her heart was here even when she was not able to make it because of distance and/or inclement weather. When we were able to visit her in Gobles we would always be generously treated to lunch at the local diner and then retire to her home for a time of playing games. She and my wife loved to play Boggle. My wife is good at that game, but I must admit Rachel could come up with some obscure words and most often ended up winning. I would retire in a nice soft recliner and enjoy reading some of her many books. She loved the company and we loved being able to catch up on time missed because of the distance. We will miss her smiling face and her pleasant demeanor. Goodbye dear friend until we meet again.

*James Thorsten, Pastor  
Riverside Christian Church*

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**James Thorsten** - January 04, 2021 at 12:06 AM

SM

“ Miss Henderson is one of the best teachers I ever had. She was what some would call strict, but she was fair and she cared about us all. She loved to read and she loved to teach. She truly had a great heart and I am blessed to have known her and to have been one of her students. May she Rest In Peace.

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**Stephanie Macomber** - January 03, 2021 at 08:23 PM

KP

“ Rachel was my 6th grade teacher. I remember her fondly as caring and having high expectations for all of us. She helped to instill my love of reading. Several years later, when I was a substitute, it was a pleasure to visit with her in the teacher's lounge and hear her stories of teaching. I hope that I can have that much of an impact on the special education students I work with, as she did on me. Rest in Peace Ms. Henderson. Prayers for her family and those who helped her in the past several years. Kristy (McCoy) Payne

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**Kristy Payne** - January 02, 2021 at 05:43 PM

DF

“ I remember Rachel when she volunteered at Meadow Woods. My Gram was there and Rachel was so sweet and kind to all the residents. She had a loving heart. The residents adored her. Deb Fleetwood

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**Deb Fleetwood** - January 02, 2021 at 03:45 PM

S(

“ Ms. Henderson was my first teacher when I moved to Gobles in the 5th grade. She made me feel welcomed, which was so nice since I moved in the middle of the school year and felt out of place. She became a good friend to my mother and they spent a lot of time together over the years. She was very kind to me and my 2 children when I was a single parent. She helped supply my apartment with bunk beds for the children and food when we first moved in. She had a heart of gold and had helped so many families in Gobles. Rest In Peace. ❤️

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**Susan Barber (Woodard)** - January 01, 2021 at 06:59 PM

KB

*She was such delightful person.*

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**Kathy Buis-Nogle** - January 01, 2021 at 10:35 PM

CO

“ I remember Rachel as a lover of the American Girl stories and then sharing that love with many students at Gobles. She enjoyed the historical aspect of the books and I believe she read many of them to her classes. Once she retired she would schedule different visits with different classes and give children American Girl doll books. She always had a little presentation about a particular story before changing out the books. I think she gave all the boys hacky sacks thinking they probably wouldn't want an American Girl book. I thought of Rachel just this past week when my twin granddaughters each got an American Girl doll... one from the 30's and the other from the 50's. So sad to read this today. She was such a thoughtful and generous soul.

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**Carol O'Connor** - January 01, 2021 at 06:47 PM

MB

Rachel was a loving generous woman. She loved children and would often come over to walk my daughter, Amy, when she was a baby. She hated to drive so I was often her chauffeur until we moved. She was a close teacher friend that would give me books to share with my students. She will be missed.

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**Marjorie Brown** - January 01, 2021 at 10:13 PM

LH

“ I am greatly saddened to hear about Ms. Henderson's passing. I had her as my 5th-grade teacher, and I learned so much from her because she had high expectations of every student that sat in front of her teacher's desk. From learning all of the states and capitals to penning perfect cursive to researching Alpena - a community in Michigan, she loved whatever it is that she taught, and she expected us to love it just as much.



One of the strongest memories I have of Ms. Henderson is her love of Fritos. Every time I brought a snack pack of Fritos for my lunch, she would walk over to my desk, reach her hand in the bag, and smile as she walked away munching a couple of chips. Sharing the story of Ms. Henderson's love of Fritos at home, my mom packed two bags of them every day: one for Ms. Henderson and one for me. The gift never ceased to make her smile, and I am so grateful for that special memory that we have together.

As for reading, I also remember that we, as her students, could earn "money" for doing good deeds and scoring well on tests. At some point, Ms. Henderson would pick up "prizes" to be raffled off at the end of a month. The prizes included items like candy, books, games, etc. I had my eye on a bag of M & M's, but Ms. Henderson had other plans for me. Instead of allowing me to spend my "money" on unhealthy candy that day, she "spent" my money on something far more healthy for a 5th-grade student: she took my earnings and handed me a copy of "The Trumpet of the Swan" by E.B. White, a beautiful book that still resonates with me today. She continued to foster my love for reading that day and every day of my 5th-grade year with her - just like she did for SO many children that came after me.

I will remember Ms. Henderson so very fondly and smile when I place a book in the hands of one of my students, knowing that reading is the healthiest candy for a young mind.

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*You will be dearly missed, Ms. Henderson. Your impact on my life has always been profound, and it always will be.*

*With deepest regards and love,  
Loriann (Johnson) Harbaugh  
Class of 1987*

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**Loriann Harbaugh** - January 01, 2021 at 10:51 AM

KC

*As you know, I shared that class with you and many others, starting with day one. I know and everyone else knows that I didn't give her such an easy time as you. She took the time to understand Me where others didn't. I will always remember her and my Mom will always remember her for her Patience with Me. 🥺*

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**Kenneth Coon** - January 02, 2021 at 01:46 AM

KC

*Loriann 🥺*

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**Kenneth Coon** - January 02, 2021 at 01:48 AM

SS

“ *Awe what a great loss. She was a great friend to many. May she RIP.* ”



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**Sandra K Sincler** - January 01, 2021 at 09:46 AM

P(

“ Oh What a Sweet Lady and Loved All and could brighten a Room with her Smile, Going to be so Missed by The Gobles Community And the Gobles School Children Young and Old

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**Pam Steuben (Honicutt)** - January 01, 2021 at 09:20 AM

AD

“ I adored Rachel. She was a special part of my family. She lived with my grandparents when she was going to college at Western and she was my brother's 4th grade teacher. She also helped him with his school work after school at her house when she was his teacher.  
♥ I will hold tight to memories of her smile, laughter and hugs. ♥

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**Angela Dickerson** - January 01, 2021 at 08:46 AM