



Susan Ott Atkins

February 29, 1940 - September 29, 2025

Susan Ott Atkins, age 85, was born on February 29, 1940 in Detroit, MI, to the late Ernst G. Ott and Shirley M. (Ward) Ott. She passed away on Monday, September 29, 2025 in Saline, MI, of Parkinson's Disease and dementia.

Susan earned BSE and MSE degrees from the University of Michigan, where she met her future husband Tom, also an engineering student. Susan was the second woman in the country to earn a master's degree in Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering.

Susan and Tom married in September, 1960, and made their home in Ann Arbor, where Susan enjoyed gardening, sewing, painting, sketching, playing the piano, writing, reading The New York Times, listening to NPR, baking all the bread for her family, cooking recipes from a variety of cultures, and the family's pet cats. She loved books and could spend hours in Borders (the original 1970s independent bookstore in Ann Arbor before it became a chain). She had floor-to-ceiling shelves built in her library to accommodate her large book collection.

She liked to teach herself new things. In one era, she subscribed to multiple personal computing magazines. She said that at first, all of the articles were incomprehensible, but by keeping at it, she eventually learned enough to build her own PC from scratch. She could repair the dryer, hang wallpaper, change

a flat tire, and recane a chair.

As an engineer, she carefully captured data and tracked the results of experiments. It was not uncommon to find 12 kinds of olive oil or eight kinds of vegan butter on the kitchen counter, with testing underway and results meticulously recorded.

Susan and Tom enjoyed watching movies together on TV, working in their garden, taking walks in the tree-lined Ypsilanti neighborhood where they later lived, and watching birds. Susan and Tom took many extensive bird watching trips to Florida and logged all the birds they saw.

Susan will be remembered for her irrepressible and whimsical sense of humor (which dementia altered but did not dim), her skills as a seamstress, her beautiful garden that she lovingly tended year after year, and her enthusiasm for learning new things.

Susan is preceded in death by her husband, Tom Atkins. Susan is survived by daughters Linda Atkins, Jennifer Atkins and Charlotte Atkins; brother Richard Ott (Janet); brother David Ott (Debbie); niece Alise Owens (Jim); nephew Richard Ott, Jr.; and great-nephews Lucas Ott (Meghan) and Ben Ott (Lorrin). Cremation has taken place. Donations in Susan's memory may be made to the Humane Society of Huron Valley. To leave a memory you have of Susan or to sign her guestbook, please visit www.rbfhsaline.com.

Tribute Wall



“ *It was so nice to meet Susan. She was so kind, always with light shining in her eyes. I will always remember her and her family. May she rest in peace and light forever. I will always cherish the time I was so lucky to spend with her.*

Ellie Chamas - October 05, 2025 at 11:35 AM



“ *Dear Atkins Family, sorry to read of the loss of your mom. Even though it was expected (as it is for all of us), it still comes as a surprise. Thank you also for a very engaging, interesting obituary- so full of vitality. Lesley*

lesley - October 02, 2025 at 07:08 PM



“ *Linda, this obituary paints a vivid picture of your mother's remarkable gifts and talents. I wish I had known her* □

Lisa Garcia - October 02, 2025 at 06:54 PM