

*IRWA lost a kindred spirit in Carol Croft, SR/WA, last October. Carol joined the Association in 1979 and was a Right of Way International Education Foundation Past President. An extraordinary woman with a colorful spirit and signature spunk, Carol insisted that after she passed, there should not be a traditional memorial but a “big party with an open bar!” And so, Carol’s celebration of life event was held on December 10, 2022, at the Sonesta Hotel in Nashville.*

*Hundreds of friends and family traveled great distances across the U.S. to celebrate the life of a woman who impacted everyone she came in contact with. Many people came up to speak of Carol, expressed their gratitude for the part she played in their lives and how much they missed her. Even though people were sad about Carol’s passing, it was not a sorrowful event. Attendees laughed and celebrated the fact that they had the opportunity to know her. People shared some of her “Carolisms”—one liners and narratives that Carol came up with that always seemed to fit the situation and guide folks in their decisions.*

*Here’s to Carol Croft, SR/WA. There is no one quite like you. Thank you for all that you did for us.*



# Carol Croft

## Forever Present

Dear Carol,

I smile each time I see pictures of our last dance together at the 68th Annual International Education Conference in Cleveland. In the same way you would bring a message to us with words from a song, I'm following your lead. Dani and Lizzy Nelson and Jason Traub wrote "Dancing in the Sky," and these lyrics from their song speak to my heart and soul as I think of you:

*Tell me, what does it look like in heaven?  
Is it peaceful? Is it free like they say?  
Does the sunshine bright forever?  
Have your fears and your pain gone away?*

*'Cause here on Earth it feels like everything  
Good is missing since you left  
And here on Earth, everything's different  
There's an emptiness.*

*I hope you're dancing in the sky  
And I hope you're singing in the angel's choir  
And I hope the angels know what they have  
I'll bet it's so nice up in Heaven since you arrived.\**

It has been so hard to write this letter to you. How do you put into words everything you mean to me? Quite simply, I can't. Just like how no one can put a number on all the lives you touched or made a difference in — you probably haven't a clue how many people you have impacted or how much your words or actions meant to them.

We celebrated you tonight in Nashville, surrounded by many of your loved ones. The evening was filled with photographs and memorabilia. There were messages shared by your family and friends, each representing those you impacted throughout each phase of your life. As I reflect on the stories, one thing was made perfectly clear: you were ever present. You were ever present when you spoke and listened to me and countless others, as if we alone were all that mattered. You were ever present in the love for your immediate family (we saw some great photographs), your church, your friends and your IRWA family.

My dear Carol, you were my mentor, my counselor, my encourager but, most importantly, my friend. Although people come and go in our lives, there are certainly people who live on in our hearts with a forever presence. You, my friend, will forever be present in my heart, and you will always be with us.

Until we meet again, save a dance for me!

Judy

*\*used with permission*

