Betty June Kahler Berry was a Texan through and through. Born and bred in Fort Worth, she began her career with the Ector County ISD as a media specialist and then joined the Fort Worth Independent School District as a resource librarian. In 1984, she moved to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) where she was a consultant with Dr. Mary Boyvey and later was appointed the state’s director of library media programs. She earned a doctorate at University of North Texas, where she met fellow student, Richard Berry, who became her beloved husband and (eventually) unwavering assistant in all TLA duties. June taught as adjunct professor in the library schools at both the University of North Texas and The University of Texas at Austin. The Texas Library Association honored June with the 1998 Distinguished Service Award and, during the 2002 TLA Centennial, as one of the 100 Library Champions of the Century.

June was a librarian’s librarian. She believed that librarians should get involved, and she stayed involved with Texas libraries throughout her life. She held many committee appointments and offices in TLA, including serving as the TLA Chapter Councilor on the ALA Council and as a member of the TLA Executive Board. She was very active in the Texas Association of School Library Administrators, the American Library Association, the American Association of School Librarians, the Research and Statistics Committee, Rising Star (elementary reading and writing program), Delta Kappa Gamma International, and Phi Delta Kappa. June’s enthusiasm for everything she did and her generous, giving spirit led her to work tirelessly for each organization of which she was a member. She did the hard work – serving on committees, getting involved in projects, and promoting and supporting all the good works that her exceptional energy allowed.

After her retirement from TEA, June took on the position of first Texas Accelerated Library Leaders (TALL) Texans Project Manager where she used her considerable talents for 10 years through the 2003 TALL Texans Leadership Development Institute. As Jan Moltzan, the second TALL Texans Project Manager said, June “was the tallest of Texans.” She was universally respected and beloved by those she enthusiastically and unstintingly encouraged toward their goals. She called the graduates of the program her legacy to the profession. TALL Texans members honored June at the 2003 Annual Assembly with a “surprise” luncheon, a TALL Texans quilt, a memory book, a serenade, and the establishment of the June Kahler Berry Scholarship Fund.

June was a special lady – giving, committed to her work, inclusive, meticulously organized, and optimistic. An innately generous person, June shared her time and talent with anyone who needed her, and she did so without reserve. And, when she wasn’t promoting reading and better school libraries (which she did quite often), she organized social events that brought people together and built community within the profession and among friends. She had a certain mischievous twinkle in her eyes and voice that indicated her humor and love of fun. Even in her battle with cancer, she joined a clinical trial and lived every day to the fullest, maintaining her interest in family, friends, neighbors, Sweetheart (her cat), travel, reading, University of Texas Women’s Athletics, and keeping photograph albums of special events and trips.

June’s stepdaughters paid her a great tribute when they said of her: Everyone who knew June knew the gift of her great generosity, with her time, her ideas, and her love. She loved all the people with whom she worked and her family and friends very much, and when June loved you, you knew it. We will always remember her and feel blessed by her smart, generous, positive, funny, committed, and compassionate presence in our lives.

Barbara Immroth is a professor at the School of Information, The University of Texas at Austin.