



Arda Sprague Rutherford

October 17, 1930 - May 30, 2026

Arda Sprague Rutherford was born October 17, 1930, in Corvallis, Oregon. She died May 30, 2026, in Prescott Valley, Arizona. In between those dates she lived a life filled with family, education, accomplishments, and adventure.

Arda grew up in various locations, including Oregon, Washington, and North Dakota, due to her father's academic career in plant pathology. Arda claimed Mandan, North Dakota, as her hometown, even attending a high school reunion.

Arda started college at Washington State University at the age of seventeen. While a student, she met fellow student Bob Rutherford. They were married June 17, 1951, just two weeks after their college graduation. Bob went into the Air Force immediately, and the newlyweds moved to the Boston area. While Bob earned his master's degree in physics and mathematics, the couple became a family, welcoming their first three children. The family moved to Arizona in 1956, where they soon added two more children.

Arda was frequently a Cub Scout Leader, Girl Scout Troop Leader, Homeroom Mom, and kept herself busy with family and community activities.

Arda applied to and was accepted into the ASU School of Law in 1971, twenty years after earning her Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology. Arda distinguished herself academically, and her grades and writing skills earned her a spot on

the Law Review. Her research skills brought her to the attention of the law firm Burch & Cracchiolo, where she became a Research Assistant while still a student. Following her graduation in 1974, and passing the Bar Exam on her first try, Arda became the first woman associate at that firm. She later became the first woman to be named a Partner in the firm.

Arda pursued her interest in Native American culture throughout her adult life. She volunteered at the Heard Museum in Phoenix and started a trading company with her husband and other family members. This naturally led to an outstanding personal collection of rugs, pots, jewelry, and other native artifacts, as well as personal ties with multiple artisan families.

Following retirement, Bob and Arda moved to the Prescott area, eventually settling in the Prescott Country Club. Arda continued to use her legal knowledge and skills, serving as a member of the Planning & Zoning Commission for the Town of Prescott Valley from 2014 to 2025. Arda was widowed in 2012, after sixty-one years of marriage. She continued to enjoy her world travels and adventures, as she and Bob had throughout their marriage.

Arda was predeceased by her husband, Bob Rutherford; son Doug Rutherford, and his wife Patti Rutherford; granddaughter Molly Austin; daughter-in-law Sue (Steve) Rutherford; son-in-law Bob (Julie) Van Arsdale. She is survived by her children Mary Austin, Bob (Claudia) Rutherford, Steve Rutherford, and Julie Van Arsdale. She has eleven grandchildren and sixteen great-grandchildren.

A memorial service will be held at Windsong Villas, 3386 N. Windsong Drive, Prescott Valley, AZ, on Saturday, July 11th, at 10:00 a.m. In lieu of flowers, the family is requesting donations to Arizona Crisis Team, P.O. Box 27076, Prescott Valley, AZ 86312-7076.

Upcoming Events

Memorial Service

JUL 11. 10:00 AM (MT)

Windsong Villas
3386 North Windsong Drive
Prescott Valley, AZ 86314