

## KATHRYN (KIT) ERICKSON LANE 1939 –

*"I knew what I wanted to be in third grade."*

Kathryn 'Kit' Lane left her mark on the community as an author, a reporter and editor, an educator, and a public speaker. Much like an earlier woman historian in Saugatuck—May Francis Heath—Kit Lane researched and wrote the books that are the starting point for anyone who wants to understand the history of the Lakeshore.

Kathryn Boyd Erickson was born on October 13, 1939 to Lawrence Erickson and Mabel McElroy. She grew up in Detroit and graduated from Detroit Public School's Pershing High in 1957. She then went on to earn a bachelor's and master's degree in journalism from Michigan State in 1961. She later earned a Master of Library Science from Western Michigan University. Kit met Arthur Lane while they were working for the Southern Illinoisan newspaper in Carbondale, Illinois. Art, another Detroiter, was an army veteran with a master's in journalism from the University of Michigan. They were married on March 10, 1962 in Detroit.

Their dream was to move back to their native Michigan and run a small newspaper. They eventually came to the Saugatuck-Douglas area in 1967 and purchased the *Commercial Record*, a century old weekly newspaper that covers the Saugatuck-Douglas area.

Kit had one year to learn the town's history in preparation for the Centennial of the village of Saugatuck's establishment in 1968. "I had to do a crash course in history for a Centennial edition of the *Commercial Record*. Some of the people said, "Who do you think you are telling my history when you just got here?" "But I was lucky enough to get here when I did and talk to a lot of people who are no longer alive and tell their stories which would have been lost otherwise."

In 1978, they purchased the Fennville Herald and Kit became the editor and publisher. At the same time, she wrote lots of local history stories which led to publishing numerous popular booklets; between 1973 and 2012 Kit Lane published forty-six books.

In the 1980s, she also established a Museum of Saugatuck History and went on to serve as local historian and president of the Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society. Kit also spent many years talking with the Douglas Elementary third graders studying local history. She really loved kids & history.

The Lanes lived in a house in downtown Douglas for 38 years, then moved into a home on the 11th hole of Clearbrook Golf Course. Kit and Art have four sons. They now have the honor of being grandparents to 7 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren. Her husband of 58 years, Art, died on 6 August 2020; he was 89.

Katherine Erickson Lane researched by  
fellow Team HerStorian, Peg Sanford.

*Peg Sanford*



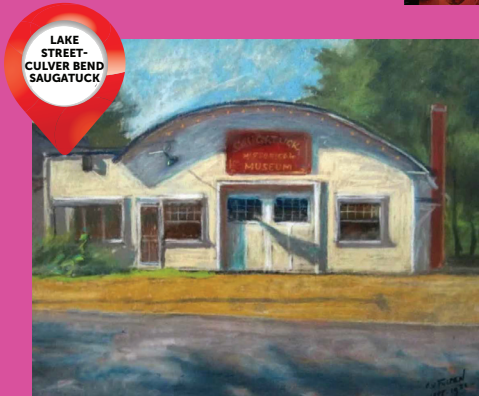
Kit writing at her home office. On the shelves behind her is part of her National Geographic magazine collection. Familiar titles of some of Kit's earliest publications are displayed on her desk.



Kit was a longtime member of the Allegan County Historical Society and friends with John Pahl who was considered the number one historian in Allegan County. The historical village at The Allegan County Fairgrounds is named after him. He invited Kit to participate in the Allegan Old Iron Bridge ribbon cutting dedication after the bridge's restoration.



Kit frequently lectured to historical societies, women's groups and genealogy clubs. Kit wrote, found acting compatriots, and then choreographed many a Saugatuck-Douglas historical meeting. She managed to use her sense of humor while performing in "somewhat" accurate costumes. Kit wrote "Lincoln's Ready-Made Soldiers; Saugatuck Area Men in the Civil War" for the 2005 Saugatuck Douglas History Museum exhibit.



This 1981 painting depicts the Commercial Record office at the Lake Street - Culver bend in Saugatuck; the sign also identifies this as the location of her historical museum.



"Kit traveled the world in her bird watching endeavors". She is an avid, avid Star Trek fan, a patron of artwork based on the local area, and collects sets of historical books.