



Ginger Waynada Wilhelmi

January 27, 1953 - March 2, 2021

Ginger Wilhelmi, 68, of St. Louis Park, MN, passed away peacefully on March 2, 2021. She was born January 27, 1953 in Fort Belvoir, VA - daughter to Colonel Bill & Rusty Wilhelmi and sister to big brother Bill IV. With their father an officer in the Air Force, Ginger grew up all over the world - including Paris, France and Wiesbaden, Germany. When the family moved back to the States, they settled in Sherman, TX, where Ginger began her journey to become a talented equestrian and was awarded many champion ribbons and trophies over the years.

Ginger earned a degree in Art History from Colorado College in Colorado Springs, CO where she pledged Kappa Kappa Gamma. She went on to earn her MBA from the University of North Texas and obtained her license as a Certified Public Accountant. She worked at Ernst & Whinney as a computer auditor and later at Jones Day in Firm Financial Services. One of the favorite projects over her career was coordinating international, multi-currency data and billing systems - a role with Jones Day that took her around the world.

Diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2003, Ginger was close to celebrating her 18th year as a Survivor. She treasured her multiple communities of Survivors. Ginger officially retired in 2012, and in 2015 relocated to Minneapolis to be closer to her daughter Rachel, who meant the world to her. Ginger was extremely active in her community, serving as a Board Member of both Playwrights' Center and Minnesota Ovarian Cancer Alliance (MOCA).

Ginger had a thirst for adventure - with Rachel right by her side. Ginger never said no to riding a roller coaster a second (or fifth) time - even later in life, holding her wig on the whole way. She treasured her trips to Europe, China, Russia, South Africa, Japan, Cuba, and Singapore. Ginger was blessed to have friends everywhere, and had a special love for Helen Hunt Falls and Garden of the Gods, CO and Santa Fe, NM.

Ginger was an avid reader, a devoted theatre-goer, and a lover of art and museums. In recent years, she doted on her Minneapolis geese and their goslings, and knew each "family" by heart. While never too interested in cooking, she was known for her brownies

and the Wilhelmi Family chocolate cake. A self-described "meat-and-potatoes girl," Ginger shared her love of steak and prime rib with family and friends during many-a-memorable steakhouse dinner.

Ginger was preceded in death by her parents, Bill and Rusty. She is survived by her loving daughter, Rachel Austin; her brother, Bill and his wife Kelly; her nieces, Krissy (Mike) and Jenny (Gary); and her grandnieces and grandnephews, Nick, Owen, Elyse, and Samantha. Ginger is also survived by her former spouse, Ken Bernstein, his wife Barbara, and their son Noah; her step-son, Paul Keithley; and many dear friends.

Memorials may be made to Springboard for the Arts at springboardforthearts.org and Playwrights' Center at pwcenter.org. The family wishes to thank MD Anderson Cancer Center, especially Dr. Charles Levenback and his team, for the excellent care they provided that allowed us so much time with Ginger.

A memorial service will be held via Zoom on Sunday, March 14th at 2:00pm CST - followed by a Celebration of Life in Texas in the fall. For the Zoom link, please contact memorialforginger@gmail.com

Comments



“ What a beautiful, truly gracious lady. So smart- engaged and engaging, genuine and caring. Always so quick to offer her warm smile and that knowing twinkle in her eye. It was such an honor to get to know her and become her friend. I always loved talking with her about theater and her art- it was such a pleasure to help her find the perfect Mpls place to hang it. Rachel- Timm and I send our thoughts and prayers. Peace and love. Curt MacKenzie & Timm Caven



Curt MacKenzie & Timm Caven - March 27 at 11:27 AM



“ Ginger was my cousin - the Wilhelmi family was somewhat scattered and our grandparents both died young so aunts, uncles, and cousins had not really stayed in touch or gotten acquainted through the years. Ginger and I reconnected when my Uncle Bill, her father, was dying from cancer. Then, Ginger visited me in Arizona not long after I lost my husband in 2016 and we had a really nice visit. We went through pictures that each of us had accumulated over the years and compared notes. We stayed in touch through phone calls, Facebook, and letters. In 2019, my brother Ray put together a Wilhelmi reunion in Colorado and Ginger made the trip and thoroughly enjoyed getting acquainted with more cousins. I will be forever grateful for the time we got to spend together, and I will really miss our talks. I have never seen someone with so much courage and really admire her ability to stay upbeat and positive throughout her ordeal. She was determined to be present for Rachel as long as possible and she managed to do this for nearly 18 years! She endured so much pain and although I wish she were still here, I know she is pain free now and for that I am grateful. Rest in peace dear Ginger and know that you were loved and admired!
Love, Christy

Christy Patterson - March 09 at 04:25 PM



“ Ginger, I will miss you so on the Playwrights' Center Board of Directors. Your passion for our playwrights and your dedication to the Board was truly special. We depended on you to ask the tough questions and your insight was always "spot on". Thank you, thank you, thank you for the years of time and talent you gave the PWC. It's been an honor to serve alongside you.

Carla Paulson

Carla Paulson - March 08 at 11:47 AM



“ I have 28 different memories to share over the past few years, but my favorite will always, always be: Ginger and I sitting next to each other at Pillsbury House Theater, my left arm around her shoulders, holding each other's right hands. Watching Rachel's stunningly beautiful & funny & moving performance of her show. We took turns crying, her head falling onto my shoulder. So proud. So grateful. For that moment in time.

I love you all so...
Jeremy xx

Jeremy Cohen - March 08 at 11:11 AM