



Barbara Sirmai

December 26, 1943 - January 6, 2025

[PHOTO]

BARBARA SIRMAI, 81, died peacefully on January 6, 2025, at her home in Minneapolis. The cause was cancer. Barbara and her husband, Mark A. Peterson, were on a fall visit from their residence in southern California when her condition worsened. She spent her final weeks in the company of trusted caregivers and loved ones, including lifelong friends.

Barbara was born on December 26, 1943, the first child of Edward W. and Audrey P. (Johnson) Sirmai. A brother, Gregory, now deceased, and a sister, Pamela, followed. Barbara's interest in politics began at the city's Washburn High School. At the University of Minnesota, where she majored in political science, Barbara took part in student government and joined the sorority Alpha Gamma Delta. After graduating in 1965, she briefly worked in the Washington office of U.S. Representative Donald Fraser.

Barbara and Mark met at the university. Following Mark's graduation in 1966, the two married and moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts. During Mark's three years at Harvard Law School, Barbara worked at nearby MIT and became a skilled photographer. She loved the music of The Rolling Stones, The Doors, and Frank Zappa, although she saved her greatest acclaim for the later advent of Prince. Her interest in architecture and design led the couple to an unlikely pastime in Cambridge, building furniture for themselves and their friends.

After spending the summer in Los Angeles in 1968, Barbara and Mark

returned a year later and settled in the beachside neighborhood of Venice with their beloved Irish setter, Sam. Barbara had a strong sense of social justice and deeply opposed the Vietnam War. Inspired by her, Mark soon left his first job as an attorney in L.A. to practice selective-service law, assisting young men with issues tied to the military draft. He and Barbara later opened their own storefront law office in Venice, not far from their first home. Both buildings had been neglected for years. Barbara's keen design eye and relentless grit played a big part in their restoration.

More recently, Barbara enjoyed her stays in Minneapolis, a short walk from the neighborhood where she grew up. She will be remembered for her sharp wit, her fondness for lively dogs, and her belief in the promise of equality and fairness for all. A visitation will be held at 1:00 p.m. on Jan. 20, 2025, at Lakewood Garden Mausoleum, 3600 Hennepin Ave. S., Minneapolis.

www.Washburn-McReavy.com

Edina Chapel 952-920-3996

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN **20**. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (CT)

Lakewood Garden Mausoleum and Reception Center
3600 Hennepin Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55408

Tribute Wall

JR

“ in the 50's and 60's, Barb's mother's Aunts, her cousins and families would come to the Sirmai residence for Thanksgiving. Too many people it seemed, including Audrey's Aunt Marie, cousin Pauline and cousin Helen with her farm family from Hector, Minnesota. It is a great memory, including movies taken by my Aunt Pauline. (I have a copy of a movie on some electronic media of those days) for which Pam has seen. Barb was a true "city girl" and family. A classy person even then. It sounds like she continued same. Bless her memory.

John Roebke

John Roebke - January 19, 2025 at 01:30 PM

AL

“ Andrew Sackett and Ashley Lipinski purchased the Joyful Memory for the family of Barbara Sirmai.



Andrew Sackett and Ashley Lipinski - January 18, 2025 at 03:27 PM

AL

“ Andrew Sackett and Ashley Lipinski planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Barbara Sirmai.

Andrew Sackett and Ashley Lipinski - January 18, 2025 at 03:27 PM

CS

“ *CRMC Staff purchased the Sweet Sincerity for the family of Barbara Sirmai.*



CRMC Staff - January 15, 2025 at 01:05 PM

CS

“ *CRMC Staff planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Barbara Sirmai.*

CRMC Staff - January 15, 2025 at 01:05 PM