



Constance Wurtele Packard

March 28, 1932 - April 9, 2024

Constance Wurtele Packard died on April 9, 2024 in Minneapolis, MN, at the age of 92. She passed peacefully in her sleep surrounded by family and caregivers. She died of metastatic lung cancer which she bore with grace and courage for many more years than her doctors had predicted. Her family is deeply grateful for the long time we had with her, and for the excellent care she received from so many in Minnesota. We are grateful for the dignity she saw in people, and the connection she experienced with them. She elevated and deepened many conversations, was a steadfast friend and parent, and was always there to provide wise counsel with warmth and humor. We are thankful for the love she shared so generously with us. The following is a description of the major events of her life in her words.

Constance grew up in Minneapolis, and after graduation from Smith College got married and moved to Newport, R.I. when her husband (William Theodore Chafee, II) joined the Navy. Naval duty ended with two very interesting years in Morocco in the mid 50's shortly after Morocco gained its independence from France, and where their oldest son (William Theodore, III) was born. Their daughter (Claire) was born in Boston while her husband finished his architectural degree. Then a move to New York City where her husband worked for the architect, I.M.Pei, and where their youngest son (Matthew) was born. After 15 years of marriage, they were divorced and Constance stayed on in NYC for a total of 56 years. In the process of searching for her work,

Constance did graduate work at NYU, getting a Masters degree in history and accreditation to teach high school history. By that time, their oldest son had been diagnosed with schizophrenia and a very turbulent and traumatic period ensued. Constance became fascinated by the family therapy they had experienced. She went back to NYU for a Masters degree in social work and further training at two family therapy institutes, one in NYC and one in Westchester County. Constance worked as an outpatient therapist in a community mental health center in New Jersey, commuting from New York. During her time there she started a family therapy unit in her department and introduced it into the day treatment program for people with more serious mental illness. It was clear from her son's and her own many experiences with the mental health system that the system was broken. Her work then became searching for and learning about alternatives to the prevailing system and getting involved with professionals and groups of recovered patients who shared this interest. Constance was co-founder of an alternative community-based program, Windhorse Integrated Mental Health, which over the past 30 years has spread from Northampton, MA with programs in Boulder, CO, San Luis Obispo, CA and Portland, OR.

Constance also co-founded INTAR, International Network for Treatment Alternatives and Recovery, with a psychiatrist colleague who had grown up in Vienna and had European colleagues involved in similar work. During these years she was involved in a number of projects and organizations. She spent a lot of time in Ojai CA, San Francisco, Cape Cod and western Massachusetts.

A second marriage of 10 years (to Edward Packard), with a remarried family of 6 children (including Edward's children Caroline, Andrea and Wells), also ended in divorce. Following the end of the marriage, Constance was free to

pursue a personal spiritual quest and had the opportunity to study and experience Siddha Yoga and later Buddhism in several of its varieties. She went on retreats, endless workshops, a number of camping trips, and made some amazing and wonderful friends. In 2017, she moved to Abiitan, signing up while it was still a parking lot because she liked the sound of the underlying principles and wanted to be near her youngest son and his family. She heard about Abiitan from her sister (Mary Vaughan), and the fact that her sister also lived there was one of the great benefits of the move. Two of her three grandchildren (Roan and Nina Chafee) live in Minneapolis and her third grandchild (Simone Marshall-Chafee) lives in Cambridge, MA with her parents Claire and Jennifer Marshall, Claire's partner. Constance's oldest son lives in Vermont.

Constance was predeceased by her parents Charlotte Lindley Wurtele and Valentine Wurtele, her first husband, sisters Ann Lawrence and Mary Vaughan, and brother Angus Wurtele. She is survived by her sister Joan Wurtele, sister-in-law Margaret Wurtele, her three children Claire (Jennifer Marshall), Ted, Matt (Amy Larson), and by three grandchildren (Simone Marshall-Chafee, Nina and Roan Chafee).

A public memorial service for Constance will be held at 10:00 am on Saturday, May 25th, 2024, in the chapel on the lower floor of the Garden Mausoleum at Lakewood Cemetery, 3600 Hennepin Ave. Minneapolis, MN 55408. A reception at 11:30 am will follow in the reception area on the upper floor of the Garden Mausoleum. In lieu of flowers, donations in Constance's memory may be given to Second Harvest Heartland, PO Box 64051, Saint Paul, MN 55164.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

MAY 25. 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM (CT)

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

Reception

MAY 25. 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM (CT)

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

Tribute Wall



“ Washburn-McReavy Funeral Chapels created a Celebration of Life for Contance Packard in memory of Constance Wurtele Packard



Washburn-McReavy - May 10, 2024 at 10:48 AM

JM

“ I met Connie during our training at family Institute of Westchester and we remained friends ever since. As much as I thought I knew Connie I learned more about her when I read the obituary on this site and was even more impressed by all she has accomplished. She was a true friend. I don't have a specific memory as much as a general knowledge of what real friendship is. Someone you trust and look to for support and guidance. She was there for me through good Times and bad times as I hope I was for her. I will genuinely miss her friendship.

Jennifer Manocherian - May 23, 2024 at 06:55 PM