



Mary Jane Gwin-Lenth

May 11, 1944 - January 31, 2026

Mary Gwin-Lenth, age 81, of New Hope, passed away peacefully surrounded by family on Saturday, January 31st. Mary was born in Minneapolis on May 11, 1944, to parents Edmund Earl and Frances Sprenger Lenth. She graduated from West High School in Minneapolis in 1962 and then spent a year in Austria in the International Christian Youth Exchange program.

Mary graduated from Hamline University in St. Paul in 1967 with a double major in sociology and religion, which would lead to future endeavors in various social work positions, including as a supervisor in Head Start in St. Paul, and the Center for Urban Encounter in Minneapolis.

Jere Gwin, of Detroit Lakes, MN, and Mary, who first met at Hamline, were married in the backyard of Mary's family home on June 10, 1972, and they combined their surnames. They welcomed their daughter Sara Elizabeth in June of 1976. Mary and Jere celebrated 53 years of marriage in 2025. They have been active members of the Spirit of Hope United Methodist Church, in Golden Valley, MN, since 1979.

Mary later attained her Master's Degree in Public Administration from Hamline in 1999. She served on the New Hope City Council from 2000 to 2006, opting not to run for re-election in order to take on her favorite role, grandmother to identical twin boys, Ethan & Noah.

Mary served as a commissioner on the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission, was the city representative on the local cable commission, and also served on the boards of the New Hope Crime Prevention Fund, and the local lake association. She was also active in the League of Women Voters. Mary was a passionate advocate for victims of clergy sexual abuse and participated in a church committee dealing with the issue, and in the WATCH courthouse monitoring program.

Mary was also an accomplished, self-taught woodworker. Her other hobbies included sewing, traveling, and tending to her cherished backyard garden with Jere.

Mary is survived by daughter Sara Perez (Robert) of Santa Barbara, CA, grandsons Ethan and Noah, brother-in-law, Robert Frazee, sister-in-law Susan Lenth, cousin Joan Jemison, along with many beloved cousins, nieces, nephews and friends. She was predeceased by her parents, sister Frances Frazee, and brother Charles (Charlie) Sterling Lenth.

A celebration of life for Mary will be held at 11am on Saturday, May 9th at Spirit of Hope United Methodist Church, 7600 Harold Avenue, Golden Valley, MN.

Tribute Wall

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“ *It is with extreme sadness that Mary - - and her spirit of understanding and love for many friends and relatives - - have departed this world. In her path, fortunately, she has provided us with a strong sense of compassion and fairness for others.*

We are endowed with her creed to do "what is right" in our relationships with the many people who share in our occupying this fragile planet called Earth.

May she be granted eternal peace for the multitude of exemplary gestures over her lifetime.

*Don Shook
Las Vegas. Nevada*

Don Shook - March 15 at 12:50 PM

GL

“ *Jere and Sara, My thoughts and sympathies to you both on the passing of Mary. I was just thinking of her the other day. I always admired and respected her for her honesty, caring character, and friendship. I always enjoyed our conversations. She led a wonderful life and enriched many others. Memories of her bring a smile to my face.*

Gary Link

Gary Link - February 08 at 10:13 AM