



A fond farewell...

The gift of time is the greatest gift of all. She gave generously of that, to both family and friends. She was the best sister ever, and I miss her so.....

~Karla~

Gifts in Kathy's honor may be made to Hospice of the Western Reserve, whose gentle care brought comfort to our family. Details for online or mailed contributions are at hospicewr.org/give.



*Born Katherine Alma Wirthwein
on May 16, 1948, Kathy was in
tune with nature all her life.*



As a child she created beautiful terrariums for red efts and chameleons – the latter happily reproducing in their environment. The Museum of Natural History was so impressed they came to investigate how she had managed to accomplish something they could not.

She loved horses, and built a miniature horse ranch complete with race track in the woods so she could host imaginary races with horses she realistically fashioned out of pipe cleaners. She left behind boxes of horse racing books now donated to an equine center, and a collection of 200 china and porcelain horse statues in need of a home.

She loved checkers. At age 10 she beat an MIT graduate math student, and enthusiastically read and studied and played the rest of her life. She would be happy to know we donated her extensive checker book collection to her local club, and dozens of beautiful checker board sets to a children's learning center created to teach critical thinking to kids.

She loved the great outdoors. It was her natural habitat, and she was an expert on woodland plants, mosses, mushrooms and ferns. She collected all, and invented a process whereby she embedded scenes in acrylic so her treasured outdoors could become part of her indoor living. She invented a silk-screening process as well utilizing those plants to create unique and wonderful notecards. Although she never thought of herself as an artist, she was in fact a truly talented one.

She loved ferns. During her time as a researcher with Boston City Hospital, she nurtured a Boston fern brought from our camp in Vermont, which still resides in her Ohio home all these many years later. She sent more from Vermont every year, in UPS boxes, and in any car making the trip after a camp visit then heading home to Ohio. They are now thriving in the landscape of her beloved home. Some of her ashes now come home among them in both places, as she wished.

She loved her home and property. After the Boston years, and after our father died, she moved in with our mother in Columbus. They lived well together, with Mother maintaining order inside, and Kathy the lawn and many gardens outside. After Mom died in 2009, Kathy organized estate and yard and garage sales, and Karla repaired and upgraded the house for sale. Harry bought the property next door to Judy in South Euclid, improvements were made, and at Christmas 2010 Kathy moved in. She took title to the house in 2015 and took great pride of ownership. A dedicated member of the South Euclid Garden Club, she labored constantly and happily to create the natural outdoor environment she envisioned. It meant the world to her.



Her favorite traditions included summers at camp, and protecting our lake as a Greeter, monitoring boats for invasive species as they entered our still pure waters. She especially enjoyed Vermont's Fall Foliage weekends with pancake breakfasts, afternoon desserts and craft shows. At home, celebrations at Brady and Eric's, featuring great food, good friends, and plenty of laughter were special times. She loved Thanksgiving at the Mundsons' as well, and Christmas Eve with the family's pass-around game. Kathy also looked forward each year to the Cleveland Botanical Garden's Christmas Tree display, where she delighted in seeing how each organization interpreted the season. She cherished attending artistic events at ARTFUL and throughout Cleveland, and each year she lent her perfect-pitch singing voice to the Cleveland Orchestra's beloved holiday sing-along.

She was so brave. Somewhat autistic, with high functioning Asperger's syndrome, she met life's challenges with studied courage. That which terrified her, she faced head on. She dove off the high board at summer Camp Farwell, graduated from the University of New Hampshire and pursued a masters degree at Miami of Ohio. During the working years that followed, her apartment in Cambridge overflowed with plants, books and hobbies, a haven while she explored and enjoyed city life. In Columbus, she overcame anxiety to help people with their taxes at H&R Block, and graded college entrance exams. Concerned that so many students couldn't spell or write coherent sentences, she worried about our country's future. She was an informed voter, always, and cared deeply about the greater world beyond her small slices of paradise.

She was a cancer survivor. Having already survived breast cancer, in 2021 Kathy was diagnosed with endometrial cancer. Following chemotherapy infusions she enjoyed a year's remission and meaningful time at camp in Vermont before the cancer returned in force as recurrent peritoneal cancer. Her positive attitude and various treatment protocols kept it at bay until this past summer, when it spread to her liver, and ultimately, finally, did her in on July 23rd. Throughout those years of difficult battle, she treated it routinely as an inconvenience, living her life as usual, always believing that being in good health in all other respects she would prevail and yet live a long life. When that was not to be, she welcomed Hospice care, and died peacefully at her beloved home surrounded by family and friends. **She was an inspiration to us all.**

To enjoy a video of these wonderful photos of Kathy, please go to

youtu.be/1lPX_o6GQmI