

JULIANNA "JULIE" TURNQUIST UNDERWOOD



On Tuesday, August 8, 2023, Julianna "Julie" Turnquist Underwood, of Mt. Lebanon, passed away at the age of 82. She had suffered from idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, a disease with no apparent cause or cure. Julie is survived by her dear husband of 57 years, Millard K. Underwood. Loving mother of the late Geoffrey (Heidi Kramer Underwood) and Kimberly (Robert Neubauer) Underwood; grandmother of

Kaylee Underwood, Reece Underwood, Anna Neubauer, and Troy Neubauer; sister of the late Robert Turnquist and the late Helen Turnquist Morgan and the late James Edwin Turnquist; sister-in-law of Elsie (Lee) Wehmeier and the late Joan (Jorge) Wehmeier. She was the proud aunt of 27 nieces and nephews and is also survived by many great-nieces and great-nephews.

Born in Duluth, Minnesota in 1941, Julie was the youngest of four children from her parents, Marion and Axel. She grew up on Lakeview Drive, with a childhood spent playing with friends in the snow, ice skating, and swimming in the lakes, including at Island Lake at her family's cabin. Julie was a 1959 graduate of Duluth East, where she was voted most athletic girl, even without the benefit of organized sports for girls. Her love of athletics and activities stayed with her throughout her life. For college, Julie attended Knox College, in Galesburg, Illinois where she obtained a degree in early childhood education and was a proud Pi Beta Phi in the Beta-Delta Chapter. Julie loved working with children and combined with her love of the mountains and snow, she successfully interviewed with Denver Public Schools after her Knox graduation in 1963. Julie taught first grade for several years in Denver until she met her husband, Millard while water skiing at the Horsetooth Reservoir, jumping the wake and impressing him as he watched from the boat. Nurturing their growing family of Geoff and Kim, Julie and Millard moved to Idaho Falls, Idaho then Virginia Beach, Virginia. She loved being by the ocean and the friends and community of Kempsville, with backyard oyster cookouts and kids playing outside, and the families of Emmanuel Episcopal Church. The Underwoods moved to Pittsburgh in 1974, where Julie and Millard settled in the Markham Elementary school area enjoying life with friends and neighbors, playing tennis, biking, cross-country skiing at South Park, downhill skiing at Seven Springs, canoeing the area's streams and participating in activities with the American Association of University Women and Newcomers Club.

Julie taught nursery school for several years at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, nurturing three and four-year-olds in their early development. She also supervised Mt. Lebanon's Elementary School Summer Recreation Program for eight years. She was an ice-skating rink guard for 6 years from when the rink opened in 1977, donning the bright orange jacket and whistle, a rare job for a woman in those days. Julie loved music, playing the flute, piano, and guitar, and attending concerts frequently at the Pittsburgh Symphony, the Pops, and the River City Brass Band. She enjoyed being in the choir at St. Paul's with Millard as well as being on the church's Altar Guild.

Julie had a lifelong interest in gourmet foods and helped usher in an early wave of the food revolution in the 1980s, including teaching cooking classes at the Crate. She also seemingly won almost every cooking contest she entered, winning the best chocolate chip cookie recipe and BBQ sauce and Pecan Rum pie at area festivals.

Her most fulfilling work, however, was the 20 years she spent at Children's Hospital in Oakland as a Child Life Specialist. She and her colleagues helped pioneer this new field, working with cancer, transplant, and other surgical patients; helping the children to understand and handle their difficult diagnoses and hospitalizations. They worked tirelessly to offer them a place to learn, rehabilitate and play outside of treatment. On tough days she would walk to Phipps Conservatory to renew her spirit amongst the beautiful flowers, plants, and displays. Julie would later become a volunteer docent at Phipps sharing the beauty of the Conservatory by leading tours, identifying plants, and educating patrons for 22 years. Commuting to Oakland daily on the 41-C and 44-U buses forged many friendships with her bus buddies that included breakfast parties and celebrations.

After retirement, Julie and Millard went on many adventures including a 6-week retirement-victory skiing tour of 15 ski resorts. They also had a great love of hiking in many Western mountains and National Parks in the U.S. as well as in Canada, Scandinavia, and Switzerland. Julie especially loved backpacking in Mt. Assiniboine British Columbia, Pine del Torro in Argentina and Chile and carefully hiking past bears in Glacier.

Julie continued to bike, ice skate, and ski until a couple of years ago and loved biking with her friends in the Cycopaths Biking Group. Julie and Millard also biked from Washington, D.C. to Pittsburgh, camping along the way, and from Passau, Germany to Krems, Austria. She loved being a member of the Sylvan Canoe Club, paddling her kayak, and swimming in the Allegheny River in Oakmont. Her well-tended perennial front garden at home caught the eye of the Pittsburgh Post Gazette, as well as many neighbors and passersby, who would ask "What is that flower, it's beautiful," or would stop for a glass of wine on the "5-O'Clock" patio bar.

A Celebration of Julie's Life will be held on September 2, 2023, at 1 pm at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 1066 Washington Rd., Pittsburgh, PA 15228. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions are suggested for Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh.