

PATRICE "PATTI" HUWALT BENNETT



It is with profound sadness that we announce the unexpected passing of Patrice "Patti" Huwalt Bennett, who departed peacefully in her sleep at home, on October 24, 2023, at the age of 72.

Patti was born on November 5, 1950, to Alfred "Ike" Huwalt, Jr. and Veronica "Roni" Huwalt in McKeesport, PA. She grew up in Lincoln Borough and graduated first from California State College with a bachelor's degree in Education and later McDaniel College, where she earned a Master of Science in Curriculum and Instruction.

Patti was a source of light to all who knew her. She was generous beyond words, a comfort to those in need, and an unflagging advocate for human rights and equality. Her greatest contribution to the world she so recently departed is that she made everyone's life a little better simply by having been in it. Her ability to act as a guiding spirit and inspiration for so many began with her being the eldest of four children and lasted throughout her lifetime as a mother and educator.

Patti started her professional career as a teacher, before transitioning to working in social services. She was a volunteer who spent many hours promoting adult literacy, providing tutoring to individuals developing reading skills, serving and delivering meals for the Brownsville Soup Kitchen, coaching soccer, acting as an RCIA sponsor, teaching CCD and leading Youth Group for her church and acting as lunchroom and playground monitor at St. Agnes Catholic School. It was in southern Maryland in 2000 that Patti found her calling once again in the field of education. From the annual Crab Feast to teachers' happy hour at the Greene Turtle, from acting as a sponsor for school clubs to countless students blossoming under her guidance, it was here Patti truly flourished. Fostering lifelong friendships and connections with her fellow teachers, it was at La Plata High School where she devoted many years to teaching English before eventually retiring.

Patti's greatest joy in life was her family. To say she was active in their lives would be a disservice to the amount of time and love they shared. Though she could regularly be found at Bird and Bee's house on Friday for pizza and laughs, or at Pay and Elaine's house for Sunday breakfast, nowhere was Patti happier than when she was with her grandchildren. Whether it was watching Elizabeth perform or cheering for Lena at sporting events and robotics competitions, or being completely enveloped in the world she and Patrick created together, she delighted in every moment they shared. Patti cherished every cup of tea, every piece of creme brulee french toast, every gathering and every drive together with her grandkids. Patti's love of traveling took her everywhere from as far away as New Zealand or Croatia to all over the United States. Whether driving to Florida or North Carolina, or flying to Colorado, her time spent visiting and exploring with her loved ones provided her with endless stories and a lifetime of happy memories. Patti's love knew no bounds, extending its warm embrace to her extended families and bonus grandkids. She relished beach trips, family gatherings, and performances, and her characteristic enthusiasm and affection illuminated every occasion she celebrated with them.

Patti was an active member of Alpha Xi Delta sorority as a member of the Order of the Rose, celebrating 50 years of membership. She participated in several book clubs, routinely taking weekends to make the 300 mile drive to and back from southern Maryland for discussion. An avid martial artist, not only had Patti attained the black belt ranking of Sandan, but in 1981 Patti had the distinction of being the first woman ever to be granted Shotokan Karate of America's Man of the Year award. Creative and with a passion for art, Patti loved painting. She adored crafting and could regularly be found out and about with her cousin Kelly Goldman everywhere from flower arranging classes to glassblowing workshops. Nearly all invitations sent Patti's way were met with her response that she would be there, even if they came with the caveat that she would be a bit late as she was double-booked that day.

Patti is survived by her sons Ian "Bird" Bennett and his wife Bridget "Bee" (O'Neill) and Mark "Payday" Bennett and his wife Elaine (Earl) and her grandchildren, Elizabeth, Helena "Lena," and Patrick Bennett. She is also survived by her siblings, Mark A. Huwalt, Lynne M. (Michael) Mercillott, and Lisa H. (Jeff) Lampo, nephews Sean (Stephanie) and Kevin (Aleka) Mercillott, Brenden Lampo, Jesse Huwalt, and Matthew Atwood, and great-nephew Sawyer Mercillott. She was preceded in death by her parents and her sister-in-law, Lynn A. Huwalt.

To honor Patti's lifelong dedication to literacy, memorial contributions can be made to Reading Ready Pittsburgh or your local affiliate of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.

Visitation will take place at **JEFFERSON MEMORIAL FUNERAL HOME**, 301 Curry Hollow Rd. Pittsburgh, PA 15236 on Friday, November 17, from 2-4 PM, and 6-8 PM, with a memorial service at the funeral home on Saturday, November 18, at 10:00 AM. The service will be followed by a luncheon and celebration of her life at Saint Agnes Hall in West Mifflin.

To leave online condolences, please visit:

www.jeffersonmemorial.com



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