

CHRISTINE FONDI



A tribute from her loving son, Matthew Henkel:

Christine Fondi, a beloved daughter, sister, mother, grandmother, aunt, and friend, passed away peacefully at 8 am on Tuesday, May 7, 2024, after bravely battling rapidly advancing pulmonary fibrosis. She was 71 years old.

Christine was born in Berea, Ohio, in 1952, the third of seven children to Ruth and Ben. She spent her formative

years in Cartaret, NJ and Ross Township, PA. From an early age, Christine displayed a remarkable passion for the arts, a passion that would shape her entire life.

Dedicating herself to a career in arts education, Christine served as an ambassador for creativity, touching the lives of thousands of students. For over two decades, she shared her expertise as an art teacher in the South Butler County School District, leaving an indelible mark on her students. In addition, she served as the first Director of Art Education at the Pittsburgh Children's Museum, where she continued to inspire young minds. Her impact extended beyond traditional classrooms as she also taught at the Pressley Ridge School and worked tirelessly with the North Hills Art Center, always nurturing and encouraging others to embrace their inner artistry.

As a mother, Christine was the epitome of love and devotion. She was the primary parent for her son Matthew, and later played an active role in the upbringing of her two grandchildren, Emily and Rik. To her daughter-in-law Misae, she was a pillar of strength and unwavering support. Christine's nurturing spirit extended beyond her immediate family, as she welcomed and embraced her son's friends as if they were her own, earning her the title of the "cool mom." Her home was a sanctuary for many, filled with laughter, warmth, and acceptance. She was equally cherished as the "fun aunt" by her numerous nieces and nephews, always ready to infuse any gathering with joy and laughter.

Sardonic, hilarious, caring, giving, and frank, Christine's presence illuminated the lives of all who knew her. Her infectious laughter and compassionate nature left an indelible mark on everyone she encountered. She will be deeply missed by her family, friends, colleagues, and students.

Christine's legacy of creativity, kindness, and generosity will continue to inspire generations to come. Though she may no longer be with us in person, her spirit will forever live on in the countless lives she touched.

Rest in peace, Mom. Your light will continue to shine brightly in our hearts forever.

And a tribute from her dearest and oldest friend, Dolores Heagy (DJ):

Chris was a teacher. She loved the children she taught; she loved all children and she gave them art, life, and magic. Many of her grown former students have expressed gratitude for far more than an art class.

Chris loved the river, the rocks, the forest, the mountains, the moon, and Vincent Van Gogh. She had a tongue that could break rocks or leave you weak with laughter.

Chris painted moons, made mosaics, and crafted dolls with such power, I swear they walk at night. She would only give her dolls to the people whose spirit called them. But of all the things she made, she said her best creation by far was her son, Matthew.

Chris left many friends and loved ones behind including me. My roomie, my friend, my cohort in wild escapades - my life is richer for you being in it.

In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests that donations be made to Persad Center (persadcenter.org) or The North Hills Art Center (northhillsartcenter.org), both causes close to Christine's heart. A celebration of Christine's life will be held in the future. Details will be provided at a later date.