

MARY DARLENE HAMILTON

4/8/1951 - 8/16/2024



Mary Darlene Hamilton passed away at home on Friday evening, August 16, 2024, on Hilton Head Island, SC. She was 73. Darlene was born on April 8, 1951, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to her parents, Joseph and Mary Jane Rent. She graduated from Penn State University with a Bachelor's degree in social work, followed by a Master's degree in Business Administration from the University of Pittsburgh. She

married Harry Hamilton, on June 8, 1974. Harry and Darlene called Pittsburgh their home for many years, and eventually, Darlene fell in love with the beauty of Hilton Head, where they relocated for retirement. Darlene considered herself a Hilton Head girl. Darlene was the director of Child Care Partnerships at the Pittsburgh YWCA. It was her expert leadership that guided the impressive expansion of childcare in 2005. She took a leadership role with the YWCA as an Associate Executive Director, then became a director with the Northwest Institute of Research. Darlene worked on the national level as the Director at ICF International, managing the federal Child Care Bureau's technical assistance grant. Her area of expertise was childcare finance and state quality improvement programs, and it was from ICF where Darlene retired. Darlene's career passion was early childcare and education. Her love for children and her respect and care for families were the foundation of her work. She always considered Fred Rogers an esteemed mentor. Darlene was a vibrant, intelligent, and compassionate woman. She was a devoted wife and mother. Her husband, two children, and granddaughter were her greatest blessings in life. Darlene was an avid reader and gardener; loved shopping, home decorating, and animals (especially dogs); and she became quite accomplished at needlepoint. She worked and chatted alongside her network of friends for several years at Needlepoint Junction in Hilton Head, where she stitched countless pieces for family and friends. Darlene was never one to shy away from sharing an opinion, or as those who knew her well, "the look," and she was loved all the more for it. Her positivity in life, sharp intelligence, and fun-loving spirit were inspirations to everyone who was fortunate enough to know her. Darlene is survived by her husband, Harry; daughters, Megan Gottlieb and Sarah (Josef) Chlebowski; and granddaughter Maya Gottlieb. Darlene will be honored at **ISLAND FUNERAL HOME** on Hilton Head Island, SC on Saturday, August 24, 2024, with a visitation from 1:00-3:00 PM and a memorial service at 3pm. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests contributions to the National Scleroderma Foundation.

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