

644 Thursday
02/20/2025

Carolyn Marie Hexter



Carolyn Marie Hexter (October 22, 1962-February 17, 2025) passed peacefully from this life to the next at home in the comfort of her immediate family. All are invited to attend her Celebration of Life Services. Family will greet friends during a visitation at Smith Funeral Home held on Friday, February 28 from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., with a vigil prayer service to follow, beginning at 8:00 p.m. A funeral mass is scheduled at St. Mary Catholic Church on Saturday, March 1, at 11:00 a.m. with burial at Hazelwood Cemetery. A potluck luncheon will be held at the Church following the burial.

Carolyn was born and raised a member of a proud Czech family in Montvale, New Jersey, to her parents, James S Dlugos and Barbara Appel Dlugos. She was the only daughter in a family with three sons, Jim, Peter, and Andrew, and spent a lot of time with grandparents, cousins, uncles, and aunts in the area. She attended Catholic School at Immaculate Heart Academy in Washington, NJ, before departing for college. She spent two years at University of Dallas, and then completed her Bachelor's degrees in Art History and English at Grinnell College in 1985.

She then went on to earn her Master's degree in Library Science from UNC-Chapel Hill, where she met the love of her life, Jonathan Hexter, in the cafeteria. They married in 1988 and moved to Charlottesville, Virginia, where Carolyn worked as an assistant at a quilt shop before they purchased a two-acre homestead in Greenwood, Virginia, and started Little Bud Farm. Jon raised the produce and Carolyn masterfully arranged the flowers, and they sold at farmer's markets, restaurants, and grocery stores.

Together, they raised three children on their farm, Elizabeth (born 1991), Linda (born 1995), and Tommy (born 1999), all three of whom attended Charlottesville Catholic School, where Carolyn founded the School Library and served as librarian for over a decade. She was diagnosed with a brain tumor in 2011 and entered an early retirement. Throughout her entire adult life, Carolyn was an active leader in her Catholic parish communities. She cared for those with limited means by providing housing and meals, she worked with people of other faiths to influence local social justice policy, and she humbly led spirit-filled bible studies for adults and for college students.

She always enjoyed spending time in silent contemplation walking amongst trees. She was a lover of pie, the color purple, the band R.E.M., and Scotch Whiskey. Her family and flowers were always at the center of her life. For no reason other than the simplicity of the rolling hills, she loved Iowa more than anywhere, and chose to move here with her spouse Jon in January of 2021, where she proudly and joyfully spent the last four years of her life enjoying the beauty and community of Grinnell.

Carolyn is survived by her spouse Jon, all three of her children, and all of her brothers, as well as many beloved extended family and friends.

If desired, memorial contributions may be designated to Catholic Relief Services. Memorials may be mailed in care of Smith Funeral Home, PO Box 368, Grinnell, IA 50112.