



Mary Ellen Rose Ackermann

February 5, 1938 - November 2, 2019

Mary Ellen Rose Ackermann, 81, of Charles City, VA, formerly of Madera, CA passed away suddenly November 2, 2019. She was a writer, artist, master gardener and college professor who was affectionately known by the neighborhood kids as “Grandma”. Mary Ellen is survived by her son, David Ackermann; daughter, Lara Templin, and her husband, Jay; grandson, Gordon Templin; and numerous nieces, nephews, cousins and friends. Services will be private. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made to the Heritage Public Library.

Tribute Wall



“ I have only found out today of the passing of dear friend Mary Ellen. I have retired and finally had time to search for old friends of yesteryear. I was a little too late with this but it is so wonderful to see her smile in the photo, see photos of her daughter and husband, and photos of Gordon who must have truly brightened her days. I was a colleague of Mary Ellen's at Cato Research in Durham. I was newly returned to the workforce after being home with children for a few years. I don't know that I would have made it without Mary Ellen. So kind and patient, always so willing to help and teach. Mary Ellen introduced us to Umstead Park and was able to identify every flower, every tree that we saw. My youngest children were 4 years old by then and enraptured by her descriptions of the forest flora and fauna. Attached is a photo of Mary Ellen and my son, Stephen, by the car. He ran up to greet her as he had met her before and always loved being with her. It is with a heavy heart that I found this obituary and am sharing my memories, but Mary Ellen is someone who stood as a standard to me for making your life the best it can be and never mind the circumstances or criticisms of others. She was always so positive and so encouraging. I will never forget her and wish I had found her sooner. We had moved to Massachusetts for many years and returned to NC for retirement. Blessings to Mary Ellen's family. Attached is a photo of Mary Ellen and Stephen on that day in Umstead Park. Elaine Laux



Elaine Laux - January 16, 2021 at 12:19 PM



“ 2 files added to the album Memories Album



Lara Ackermann - November 27, 2019 at 08:11 AM



Mom was always a big supporter of the Heritage Public Library, in both New Kent and Charles City counties. These photos are from the ribbon cutting and opening of the new library building in New Kent.

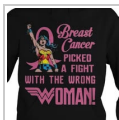
Lara Ackermann - November 27, 2019 at 08:09 AM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Lara Ackermann - November 27, 2019 at 08:04 AM



Mom loved to garden. She had always wanted to see the famous Longwood Gardens, and after we had gone to a lecture on them (at Christopher Newport University), she really wanted to go. So in the spring of 2016 we made the trip. She was having trouble with getting exhausted with all the walking, so Gordon went and got her a wheelchair to help her continue the visit.

Lara Ackermann - November 27, 2019 at 08:12 AM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Lara Ackermann - November 27, 2019 at 07:58 AM



Mom had given me new fancy icing tools and her 81st birthday cake was my first chance to try them out. It didn't work as well as I had hoped, but she loved the cake anyway.

Lara Ackermann - November 27, 2019 at 08:10 AM

“ I’m extremely sad but was not entirely surprised by the news Gordon gave me. As I said to him, his grandmother lived at least a decade longer than she thought she would. Ever since he’s been alive she had told him something to that effect. From this we can take heart that she felt she had lived a long life; longer than expected.

Mary Ellen was a great friend. In 1995 at the Eno River annual meeting, the call was put out for volunteers to work on a mural. She was the only person that responded to working on it with me. She turned out to be better suited than most of the “professional” artists that worked on it. Much of the mural was painted on the weekends when she could be there.

The Hayti Mural she swore she would not climb up the scaffolding, but there she was, up high with one of her students. She worked with youth that were in the system, showing them how to draw with incredible patience. She engaged them where others failed. She was a talented instructor.

Monkey she adopted through a fellow artist. Sam and Monkey loved the small pond which delighted Mary Ellen. Monkey would bring gifts to the dog in the mirror. Their happiness made her happy. Mary Ellen designed an elaborate garden with her bottle drip irrigation system for periods of drought. Her garden in Durham was extensive, full of innovative surprises. She grew the most beautiful hollyhocks.

I went with her when she got her wedding band cut off. We then went out to celebrate. For many full moons Mary Ellen accompanied me as I painted with a headlamp. She did elaborate botanical illustrations herself. She attended all of my art openings/open studios, she was there. The most dependable supportive friend I’ve ever had. She is not replaceable.

It was depressing for me when she left Durham, but it made sense,

particularly when her grandson arrived. She was very proud of Gordon's accomplishments and felt he had gotten the best of both his parents. Her new dog was very important to her and was excellent company. Her historical novels are dense and need to be published. I hope a great agent is found to secure her written legacy. She was sharper than most till the end. When we last talked I had not a clue it was for the last time.

*Nobody lives forever but we wish she had longer. I am sorry for your loss, my loss, the world's loss of such a kind generous soul. Emily
Eve Weinstein*



Emily Weinstein - November 18, 2019 at 11:35 AM