

Karen Hill

October 13, 1939 ~ November 19, 2025

Karen Hill passed away at the age of 86, after a long meaningful life dedicated to her loving family, close friends, and purposeful work.

Born in Salt Lake City, Utah to Marion and Roy Sjostrand, Karen spent her childhood moving across the country as her father worked as an FBI agent. An only child, she lived in Milwaukee, New York, Boston, Detroit, and Seattle—experiences that shaped her into a strong and independent woman. She graduated from high school at 16, worked for two years, and then attended college at the University of Washington where she majored in math. She was bright and intelligent.

Karen met Scott Hill at UW. They fell in love, and to the dismay of her parents they eloped in Preston, ID. After marriage, they quickly started a family with the birth of Cheryl. Karen learned to be a mother, Scott worked to get his degree. A couple years later a second child Steven was born and they moved to California to pursue job opportunities.

With open arms, Karen embraced the warm, vibrant “Cali” lifestyle and even enjoyed a brief, hippy phase. Karen wanted a large family and at 25 the third and “last” child Michael was born. With three young kids, she worked as a lab technician at Bio Science Laboratory, one of the finest medical testing labs in the nation.

At 30, Karen had her 4th child, “a good mistake” Nathan. When he was just 4 months old Karen began nursing school. She completed her degree while raising four small children.

“Where the needs of the world and your talents cross, there lies your vocation.” — Aristotle.

Karen spent her nursing career in the operating room, often as a supervisor, and contributed to early efforts to organize a nursing union. She thrived at being a leader. She was in surgical teams that performed highly technical procedures such as open- heart surgeries and full hip replacements. She would say she enjoyed working in the O.R. because “the patients were asleep.” She liked the second shift because there was no one telling her what to do. She joked that it was the anesthesia that caused loss of memory later in life.

Karen’s compassion extended to her wider family. She opened her home to her mother-in-law, Lola, and her sister-in-law, Roberta when they needed a place to stay. She was a strong advocate for women’s rights, and helped women in bad relationships.

Karen was a devoted mother and grandmother. She attended every game, performance, and milestone she could—encouraging, supportive, and fully present. She cheered loudly, wasn’t afraid to speak her mind to the referees or rival parents, and was always their number one fan. Three of her eight grandchildren were hockey players who would say she was definitely “for the boys!”.

She proudly displayed homemade artwork created by her grandchildren on the walls of her home. Her home in Highland was the gathering place for the family. She loved to host friends and family for BBQ’s, holidays, and special events.

Karen enjoyed crossword puzzles, often with baseball, horse racing, or classical music playing in the background, she cherished quiet hours of birdwatching and was comfortable living alone. Karen adored animals and enjoyed the many dogs she had throughout her life, including her final little snaggle toothed companion, Foxy. She enjoyed regular bridge games, local theater, and a good meal at a favorite Italian restaurant.

In retirement, Karen traveled widely - Egypt, Scandinavia, and the Tenochtitlan ruins in Mexico. Her last travel adventures were with her best friend Leona. They explored the California coast, the Panama Canal, and Iceland.

As a mother, she treated wounds, made splints for broken bones, and provided medical guidance—but more often, it was her warmth, gentle voice, and reassuring hugs that brought the greatest healing. In her later years, she continued to serve as a health advocate and counselor to her friends, always willing to help.

Her final chapter was difficult, she liked to say, “Getting old is not for wimps.” To the very end, she proved to be a power house.

Karen is survived by her daughter, Cheryl Hays; her sons, Steven, Michael, and Nathan; and her eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren, all of whom were her pride and joy.

A Celebration of Karen's Life will be held on Thursday, December 18, 2025 from 11:00 AM-1:00 PM at Le Jardin (1910 E. Dimple Dell Rd (10600 S.), Sandy, Utah).