

# Martiena Stahlke Lewis

*August 31, 1946 ~ May 23, 2024*

Martiena Stahlke Lewis, 77, passed away unexpectedly on Thursday, May 23, 2024, due to a heart attack. The immense undertaking of writing an obituary for such a dynamic, creative, and magnetic woman is a daunting task, and no body of words can do her amazing and varied life justice. A perfunctory internet search of “Tina Lewis Park City” will result in a myriad of articles, dedications, and lists of Tina’s varied accomplishments throughout the years, but few truly know the depth and breadth of the impact that this intensely private woman had on the people around her. At her core, she was spectacularly interesting, possessed an insatiable curiosity, and held a deep desire to make the world around her more beautiful.

Tina was born in Seattle, Washington on August 31, 1946, to George and Helen Stahlke. From a very early age, Tina showed intellectual prowess and quickly learned how to sew from a next-door neighbor. Her father, an engineer, took a job at Sperry Utah in 1957, and the family relocated to Utah. While a student at Skyline High School in Salt Lake City, Utah, Tina won the national Singer Sewing contest and traveled to Europe to model the dresses she created at renowned fashion houses. Her skill as a seamstress and her jaw-dropping beauty led her to model for Seventeen magazine and sew and model for McCalls Pattern Company. She was appointed the titles of “Miss Wool” and “Miss Janzen Smile” and modeled for Utah’s Glama Mink Association, all before graduating from Skyline in 1964. Tina attended the University of Utah and was affiliated with the Chi Omega sorority.

In 1966, she married James William Lewis, a Utah native, and she embarked upon the challenges of becoming a young military wife during the Vietnam War. She and Jim welcomed a daughter, Jennifer, in 1967 while stationed at Randolph Airforce Base in San Antonio, Texas. After Jim’s military service, the family relocated to San Francisco in 1971. They returned to Salt Lake City in 1973 but soon re-engaged with Park City, Utah, where the couple had skied in the 1960s. They built their first home there in 1977. At the time, Park City was almost a ghost town, with Main Street consisting of neglected buildings, crumbling sidewalks, and tired shacks reminiscent of Park City’s silver mining boom and bust. The shabby town’s history captured Tina’s imagination. An avid and relentless researcher, Tina plunged headfirst into figuring out how to breathe new life into Park City while honoring its vibrant and distinctive past. Where others saw a dilapidated heap of a house, Tina would describe it fondly as “quaint” and “charming” and then slowly transform it into the embodiment of her ever-optimistic vision. One of the dilapidated heaps became our family home in historic Old Town, which she proudly filled with love, good cooking, and hundreds of pieces of Delftware china.

Tina joined the staff of the Park City Chamber of Commerce and quickly got to work organizing events highlighting Park City’s natural beauty while promoting economic development. Tina was elected to the City Council in 1979. Around that time, she was instrumental in restoring the Miner’s Hospital and its movement from the Park City

Resort area to where it is now, adjacent to the City Park. The legend of the human “book brigade” to transfer library volumes from the main street library to the new library in the Miner’s Hospital went down in Park City’s lore. Always busy, Tina had a way of focusing on the smallest details of the town (she coined the name “Park City Transit” and designed the Park City logo) while never losing sight of the big picture. Her lasting influence is embedded in Park City’s cornerstone events, which she nurtured for the past four decades: the Arts Festival, Autumn Aloft, Taste of Park City, and of course, the Sundance Film Festival.

Tina used her political prowess to gain support from the Utah legislature for the Sundance Film Festival. She pushed for Park City and the State of Utah to value and prioritize historic preservation while caring for her growing family – her second daughter, Erika, was born in 1984. Growing up with a mom like Tina was a world of dynamic conversation, endless to-do lists, and involvement in obscure missions fueled by her passion and lead foot in a sports car. Because of her drive and pragmatism, there was no better teammate than Tina, and she served on numerous boards for organizations such as the Kimball Art Center, Utahns for Choice, the Utah Heritage Foundation, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

In the 1990s, Tina shifted her focus to Utah’s bid for the Winter Olympic Games. She was heavily involved in event planning and organizing for Utah’s Olympic delegation. She acted as “den mother” for the Utah delegation to Birmingham for the unsuccessful 1998 bid and Budapest for the successful 2002 bid. When the Games finally arrived, Tina facilitated business partnerships between international organizations and the State of Utah. It is unsurprising that after the Olympics, Tina became the Marketing Director and Acting Director of the Utah International Business Development Office.

Her insatiable curiosity, engineer’s mind, and unmistakable charisma made Tina unstoppable. She loved research and relished solving problems. This made her remarkably good at event planning, but she was also a fantastic artist. A true Virgo, she was obsessed with tiny details. She could converse on any number of esoteric topics, from switchplates to stroganoff. She had the unique ability to see how something was made (a suit jacket, a quilt, an old house, a city-wide event, a tomato soup recipe), take it apart, and put it back together again more beautifully than its original. Her Christmas trees were perfection, her homemade chocolate pudding and pies otherworldly. But throughout her life, Tina’s true artistic passion was sewing and textiles. Whether it was English hand-smocking, restoring quilts, creating original patterns for nationally distributed sewing magazines, or devising elaborate Halloween costumes for her daughters and granddaughter, Tina transmitted her love for her life and the people in it through her sewing.

Although she was a self-proclaimed introvert, Tina had the unique ability to make people feel welcome and at home. She would remember the smallest details someone had shared in passing about their life and interests and then incorporate that memory into a later gift for them, or a connection with another friend. As a mother, she was maddeningly inquisitive, brutally honest, patient, and always generous. She endured her family’s knack for sarcasm and dark humor, often countering our snide remarks with a scoff and a knowing smirk. A favorite phrase of hers was, “No good deed goes unpunished.” She was full of good deeds and true acts of selflessness, and we hope that in whatever comes after, this tireless woman can finally get some rest.

Tina is survived by her husband of 58 years, James; daughters Jennifer Rachelle (Walt) Brett, and Erika Morgan (Monica David); granddaughter Maya Anne; brothers Karl Stahlke (Loula) and Eric (Laurel) Stahlke. She was cremated as she wished. A celebration of life is being planned for July 21 in Park City, Utah.