

Pamela Donaldson

August 24, 1946 ~ January 18, 2021

Pamela Donaldson, 74, passed away Monday, January 18, 2021 from complications due to COPD, hopefully meeting up with her brother Stewart (Sean) Donaldson and sister Laurie Donaldson Witbeck. Her parents, Allan and Ruth Donaldson, who also predeceased her, are probably wondering how their “Wild Child” made it this far.

Pamela grew up during the Golden Age, pulled herself through that teenage angst period, and leapt with relish into the Hippie era. She finally settled into the role of wife to Dominique LeRoy (since divorced) and mother to three children, Bernadette LeRoy (Salt Lake), John Paul LeRoy (Kerri, Salt Lake) and Dominique (Nick) LeRoy (Lori, Indianapolis, IN). She eventually remarried Jim Gianelo, an old South High schoolmate. She was smart, witty, talented, compassionate, and she was generous. She was liberated and independent. She could always make you laugh. She was also a combination of vulnerable and tough. It was the combination of these qualities that took her through a series of professions and transformations from waitress, custodian, band vocalist, secretary at the U. of U. Chemistry Department, executive secretary at Mountain Bell, office manager for Evans and Sutherland, U. of U. college graduate, to finally school teacher at Whittier, Hawthorne and Nibley Park Elementary schools, her own alma mater. She said her teaching experiences were the delight of her life, especially working with an increasing number of young immigrant students and their parents. Her personal life was shared with any number of family, friends and animals that she took in when they needed a home. Her animals played a major part in her world, always sharing a special place in her heart and keeping her company after her children had gone.

But her life was not all happiness and tranquility as we always wish to portray. She struggled as a single mother raising her children, was the “tough love” mom with her own kids and students, sadly was the person at the bedsides of her dying siblings, mother, and husband, and she had her own demons to deal with. She had “a long way to go and a tough row to hoe” as John Lennon sang. COPD eventually forced her into the position of a stay-at-home couch potato, but as autonomous as she was, she accepted this change affably as she now had time to re-watch all the old MeTV shows from her youth. Not a bad way to spend your old-age during these times. She maintained a special relationship with her niece, Julie Keller, and her nephew, Braden James, whose continued company and attention kept the wolves at bay as she settled in to deal with her illness.

Her death will leave a very large hole in the lives of her sisters, Anne Pipkin (Bellevue, WA), Kathleen Cederquist (Sandy, UT), Sheila Peterson (Holladay, UT) and her grandsons William Wagstaff (SLC), and Alex and Nate LeRoy (Indianapolis, IN). Pamela requested no memorial service be held. She will be cremated and her ashes scattered in the beautiful Oregon forests that she loved. Rather than flowers she would prefer donations sent to the Salt Lake County Humane Society or any animal rescue shelter. Cards can be addressed to Bernadette LeRoy at 1544 E. Bryant Ave., SLC, 84105.