

Judy E. Allen

Aug 12, 1948 to November 23, 2015

Died after a long and courageous battle with cancer. Judy was born August 12, 1948, the daughter of the late William and Evelyn Allen, and grew up in Wilburton, Oklahoma. She is survived by her devoted husband, Alan Rifkin, of South Hadley, and many friends in Oklahoma and around the country, especially her second family, Linda and Tom Francis. She is also survived by her cousin Carol Christiansen, and her god-daughters, Leah Francis, Riah Patterson, and Seneca Rasey. Judy was a special person who touched all who had the privilege of knowing her. Judy's optimistic and joyful spirit, her unending passion for life, and her basic human kindness gave inspiration to her family, friends, and colleagues. After graduating from Oklahoma University, Judy worked in publishing in New York City. A lifelong love of reading led her to a master's degree in Library Science, and she worked in public libraries in Tulsa, Connecticut, and Springfield, MA. Judy then earned a master's degree in Industrial Psychology from Springfield College, and worked as a trainer at LEGO Systems, then as a career counselor at Mt. Holyoke College. A positive impression of hospice during her mother's end-of-life experience led Judy to her last career as a certified bereavement counselor for Hospice of Franklin County. Judy's interests were many and varied, and she was often "on the go." She knew as a young girl that she wanted to fly, and got her pilot's license at age 19. She was a skilled pilot and flight instructor, and met her future husband at the first meeting of the Pioneer Valley Pilots Association. Judy's mother introduced her to the arts at a very young age, and she had a deep appreciation and knowledge of theater, dance, arts, and crafts. She never failed to impress others with how many museum and theater visits she could pack into a day in New York City. Judy especially loved textiles, and was a skilled knitter, weaver and quilter. She loved collecting textiles from around the world, making global connections with weavers in Peru and elsewhere. Judy satisfied her lifelong dream last year when she made a solo trip to Bhutan to experience the textiles there. Recently she had also worked part-time for Weave a Real Peace (WARP WeaveARealPeace.org). Judy was also a long-time runner, bicyclist, swimmer, and Pilate's practitioner, who often rose well before dawn to train for the nine marathons she completed. More than anything, Judy loved to travel--whether to South America, Egypt, the Bahamas, Italy, or just a camping trip in New England with Alan--it gave her great pleasure. Judy touched many lives among her wide collection of friends, who will remember her thoughtful ways and always kind words. A celebration of Judy's life will be held in the spring. Donations may be made in Judy's memory to: Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, P.O. Box 849168, Boston, MA 02284

<http://www2.pmc.org/profile/aj0054>