



## Joan Eleanor Wirth

December 9, 1934 - November 16, 2022

She helped us see so much.

From the time we, her children, first opened our eyes, she brought our attention to colors, shapes, and textures, to light and shadow, and to natural wonders big and small. And when she wasn't pointing wonders out, she was sketching them in pencil or painting them in oils.

This gift of enriched seeing was given not only to children and grandchildren, but also to family and friends, colleagues and students, and all who have seen her artwork.

It wasn't only through her color-filled canvases that Joan gave the world so much to see. And what she gave wasn't merely a way of seeing, but a way of being in the world. Follow your passion, use your imagination, view the world from another perspective, stay open-minded, challenge conventional wisdom – these are principles she advocated and lived.

Spirit is everywhere. Everything has spirit. This is a belief Joan held close and dear.

Throughout her life, she was a spiritual seeker, ever curious to learn more about the hidden underpinnings of the physical world, ever open to the idea that spiritual connection is possible across space and time.

She was also a bit of a monkey-wrencher. She liked to tell the story of sending dozens of rocks to unsuspecting coworkers via interoffice mail.

Tenacity is a quality she possessed and needed. It buoyed her through a difficult childhood, kept her afloat through multiple moves and career changes, and – in recent years – sustained her as she struggled with physical and mental declines.

What kept her afloat through difficulty? Hers was a life filled with love and passion for people, art, and beauty. She made it a life goal to leave this world a better place by raising her five children with love and dedication. In her later years, she continued that goal in her work as a teacher and activist.

Joan loved spending time with children and entering the world of imagination. She was passionate about education, a lifelong learner and taker of copious notes. She was an environmentalist from the time only a few people knew what one was.

Joan was a partner to her husband Rudy to whom she was married for three decades. Together they lived in a half-dozen different communities and touched the lives of many.

She was a hard worker and a woman of multiple careers. She wore many hats and wore each of them well. In addition to being a visual artist, Joan was an art professor, nursing instructor, nurse practitioner, registered nurse, puppeteer, and activist. Even with all that, she always found time to read everything from eastern mysticism to fiction, to have extensive flower and vegetable gardens, to cook extravagant meals, to hike and cross country ski, to take care of baby birds, to join an African drumming group, to travel to far-flung places like South America and Sitka, Alaska and to have long, deep,

wide-ranging conversations with family and friends.

She loved so deeply and lived what she loved: the woods of New Hampshire, the coastline of Maine, people in general, dogs and horses, books, good food, good music, ice cream, travel, and ideas.

Those who will miss Joan and will strive to carry on her legacy include her sister Elaine, her children and their partners: Karl & Anne, Raymond & Leslie, Roland & Michele, Kirsten, and Onalie & Peter; her grandchildren: Niko, Shanti, Michaela, Elianna, and Olivia; and nieces and nephews.

A celebration of Joan's life will be held at a later time. Those wishing to make a donation are encouraged to donate to an environmental organization or art program of their choice.

"An open heart is an open mind." – Dalai Lama

# Tribute Wall

RW

“ 11 files added to the album Joan Wirth and family



---

**Ray Wirth** - November 27, 2022 at 08:27 AM