



Karen Burgess Smith

January 12, 1954 - November 7, 2021

Exeter - Karen Burgess Smith, 67, of Exeter, passed away peacefully on Sunday, November 7, 2021 at Webster at Rye.

She was born in Kittery, Maine on January 12, 1954, daughter of the late Thelma St. John Smith and the late Myron Smith. Raised in Hampton she graduated from Winnacunnet High School with the Class of 1971.

She received her Bachelor of Science in Art Education from the University of New Hampshire (1974), a Master of Arts in Liberal Studies in Humanities from Dartmouth College (1983) and a certificate in Museum Studies from Tufts University (1994).

Karen shared her gift and passion for teaching in a wide range of environments. She taught art in NH prisons, middle and high school art at Concord Public Schools, and also art history at Saint Anselm College, St. Paul's School, the NH Institute of Art, and Phillips Exeter Academy where she also served as Director of the Lamont Gallery.

A long-time contributor to art education and museum-related activities in the state and beyond, Karen served on the Art Educator Certification Standards Committee for the N. H. State Department of Education, juror for the New Hampshire Scholastic Art Awards competition and juror for the Currier

Museum of Art All-State Art Festival. She also served as the President of the New Hampshire Visual Arts Coalition. Karen was recognized as "Outstanding Art Educator of the Year" in 1999 by the New Hampshire Art Educators Association. The Boston Globe recognized her as "one of the women (who) drive the arts in the Granite State" (1996). Governor Craig Benson appointed her to the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts in 2003, and then in 2006 Governor John Lynch made her chair of the Council.

In addition to supporting the arts, Karen was an artist herself and worked in multiple mediums including photography, print making, jewelry, pottery, writing, and video. Her company, Picture This Productions, received the News Media Award from the New Hampshire/National Education Association, for her "Spotlight on Schools" television series.

Karen loved all types of music from the Police and Brandi Carlisle to Paul Simon and Pink Martini. She supported a wide range of social and community causes helping to organize MLK day events and volunteering with hospice. She was a renaissance woman, teaching aerobics, playing 12 string guitar and taking up hand drum in her final years. She traveled the world meeting students, family and friends around the globe. She was a dorm mother to all who appreciated her humor, caring, and honesty. The holidays were Karen's season. She could be found wearing crazy Halloween masks, decorating the house, and buying gifts for everyone all year round. She was known for her funky artistic fashion, could bake a mean banana bread and make a mighty fine grilled cheese sandwich.

Karen brought love, hugs and laughter into the world where she was a bright shining light to all who knew her. She could always be counted on to take charge when needed and stay organized when others were not. Her positive attitude, full smile, and quick wit are gifts to us all.

Surviving family members include her husband of 40 years, Randall Raymond of Exeter; step-daughters Erin Raymond of Boscawen, NH, Megan Raymond of Charlottesville, Virginia, son Nathaniel Raymond of Eliot, Maine, her sister Julie Gagne of Ormond Beach, FL, her brother Myron "Bud" Smith Jr. of North Palm Beach, FL and many loved cousins, aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews.

The family would like to express deep thanks to the staff at Webster at Rye for their extraordinary care given during such a difficult time.

A committal service will be held at 1 P.M. Saturday, November 13, 2021 in the memorial garden of The Congregational Church in Exeter, 21 Front Street, Exeter. Relatives and friends are respectfully invited. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Rannie Webster foundation by clicking here (<https://www.websteratrye.com/donate-volunteer/make-a-gift/>) or by mail c/o Webster at Rye, Attn: Angel Blais, 795 Washington Road, Rye, NH 03870.

Previous Events

Committal Service

NOV 13. 1:00 PM (ET)

The Congregational Church in Exeter UCC
21 Front Street
Exeter, NH 03833

Tribute Wall



“ *Karen Burgess Smith*

September 18, 2022 at 12:49 AM

JG

“ I didn't know why my sister & I were not that close as most sisters would be growing up despite only being 2 1/2 years apart, but I did find out why as a young adult & that made our adult bond & love even stronger. I did not know back then, she was my protector and loved me more than words could say.

We shared a love for the beach, that our Mom created for us & so many memories at our camp & swimming, dock jumping & laughing hysterically as I would jump in behind her holding on to her bathing suit singing the Flipper theme song, horseshoe crabs & making tents out of our bunk beds & barbies & cool summer mornings with the kitchen wood stove taking the chill out & the porch swing & tree swing spinning. Memories at Grammie & Grampa Smiths in Maine & going way upstairs to visit beautiful Great Grammie Burgess & our Dad & Uncle's playing poker & them drinking "Pops home brew" & the featherbeds & pee pots & Grammies biscuits & sweet voice. We both love chai tea & ginger molasses cookies & the Wizard of Oz Lollipop song.

My sister loved everything organized in a matter of fact type of way right down to my fathers funeral. She was a take over, take charge sister that made things so much easier for Bud & I.

Remembering the weekend Karen, Mom & I spent in Singer Island for Moms 70th & the giggles at bedtime, the reprimands from Mom to "be quiet & go to sleep!" That entire weekend was a perfect time! The calls on my birthday to come hang out at their beach house in Ocean Park & Karen not taking no for an answer.

She had the absolute best wit, the quick one liner come backs that I so envied.

The over the top Christmas decor in her home was so uplifting along with her holiday jolliness & love for brunches & thoughtful gift giving & family reading the Polar Express and I could go on forever. My sister was so much more than all her degrees & accomplishments! She was a loving & compassionate friend to anyone lucky enough to know her. She made me belly laugh more often than I could count. She paved the way for me growing up in the Smith household.

I miss my sister so greatly i doubt my heart will recover but I am so

*so grateful she was my sister to share for a brief time on this earth & she could get out of that tormented body and fly high.
I Love you my "little sister that was a little bigger" (private joke) ❤️
Give Mom & Dad kisses from Bud & I*



Julie (Smith) Gagne' - November 14, 2021 at 07:03 AM

BM

“Karen was a close friend of my mother, Susan McKnight, from their graduate program at Dartmouth. She would invite my mother and I, along with one other Dartmouth friend and her family, to stay with her and Nat at her condo in Ocean Park for a few days every summer during the 1990's. The three children and three grown-ups always had wonderful times together, and Karen was a dependably warm, funny, lively, and always hospitable host. I have many fond memories of her at those summer getaways, and she will be badly missed.

Blake McKnight - November 13, 2021 at 08:47 PM



“Days of Sunshine Bouquet was purchased for the family of Karen Burgess Smith.



November 12, 2021 at 03:29 PM

SC

“ My deepest condolences to Randy & family.

Karen was the most amazing mentor (Lamont gallery (and previously at NHIA). Her guidance, selfless professional generosity, kindness, open point of view and the way she believed in my abilities made her an incredible mentor. Her influence made me a better educator and a better person.

I fondly remember her sense of humor, the way she could laugh at herself (which made me know its ok not be perfect!), her dedication to her students and to her craft as an educator, filmmaker, artist, her undeniable love for her family, her great gift giving skills (she always left me a little gift on my desk when she traveled or was just thinking about me) and her endless support and kindness to everyone she came in contact with... I could go on and on about her....

Karen touched my life in so many ways, she made me feel like I could do ANYTHING and allowed me to think BIG! I still hear her in my thoughts, giving me hope and confidence to move towards everything I am interested in.

KBS you were one of kind... no one has ever stood up to you and for that I am forever grateful. Rest In Peace my dear friend. I love you forever. Thank you again and again for being you and being a part of my life.

Sara Zela Clafin - November 12, 2021 at 02:11 PM

DS

“ Our memories of Karen are not limited to our collegial relationship at St. Paul’s School but extend well into our personal experiences. Through her kindness and generosity, Karen introduced us to beautiful Ocean Park, Maine. We immediately fell in love with the area, and it has remained our favorite getaway destination. We have such strong memories our times together there.

Karen’s warm, fun loving spirit and her ever present sense of humor will forever brighten our days.

David Seaton - November 12, 2021 at 01:45 PM

TM

“ Mrs. Smith, Julie and Bud,
I am sorry to hear of Karen’s passing. I will keep you in my thoughts and prayers.

Theresa (Brown) McGinnis - November 12, 2021 at 11:01 AM

MM

“ Bill and I are so very sorry to learn of Karen’s passing and send hugs and love to Randy and Karen’s family. We have such wonderful memories of Karen and Randy at St. Paul’s School and in Maine. What a dynamite person she was! That obituary captures her joy of living and kindness and passion. The world will miss her.
Love, Bill and Marcia Matthews

marcia matthews - November 11, 2021 at 09:53 AM



“ *Days of Sunshine Bouquet was purchased for the family of Karen Burgess Smith.*



November 10, 2021 at 08:49 PM



“ *Ms. Smith (as she will always be to meKaren never seemed to fit) was such a huge part of SPS for me. I lived in Simpson all four years. She was my advisor and had a big hand in helping me become the educator, mother, friend, and person that I am today. I can still remember the many nights we spent with her, Randy, and Nat sitting around their living room and it helped me feel at home, away from home, Be at peace, Ms. Smith. You have left such a strong legacy here!*

Jennifer Long Gatti - November 10, 2021 at 06:15 PM



Because Karen was such a vivid, creative, articulate, decisive colleague at St. Paul's, it was devastating to learn of her death, She was the kind of person one imagines will always remain alive in the world. I know she has left enduring legacies everywhere she traveled, though, and those legacies will last.

Suzanne Wilsey - November 14, 2021 at 03:17 PM