



Donna Smith Thompson

June 5, 1935 - October 28, 2024

Our indomitable mother, Donna Smith Thompson, passed away after a brief illness the morning of October 28th, 2024. Her children, Liz, Kate and Andrew, were at her side, and her grandchildren, Sam, Katey, Delia and Iris, had flown in the week before to say goodbye to their beloved Mamie. Mom was a force — funny and smart as hell, a world-traveler and champion story-teller, a lover of great conversation and competitive games — golf, Bridge, and recently, euchre — a glamorous figure, fabulous cook, and above all, a loving mother who bragged about her three children and four grandchildren at every turn. She was born in Jackson, Michigan and raised on a farm and then “in town.” She attended Michigan State briefly on an academic scholarship before hightailing it to New York City with nothing more than a train ticket and twenty dollars in her pocket, looking for adventure. She found it in her first husband, J.T. Walbert, with whom she traveled the globe, moving frequently for his job as an executive with DuPont and living everywhere from Tokyo, Japan to Orange, Texas until finally settling down in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania. In 1976, recently divorced and striking out on her own, she founded Silkworm, a clothing manufacturing company where she designed and sold a series of silk tops inspired by her travels throughout Europe. Next she launched a second line of golf and tennis skirts, as well as other sports’ clothing. This led to a successful decade-long career repping her own creations as well as other manufacturers as she drove her van chock-a-block with samples to her accounts up and down the southeastern seaboard. She had always been

destined for a life on the road and the road eventually led to the Villages, where she spent twenty joyous years reveling in sports and socializing, building a wonderful community of friends, and living the independent, autonomous life that so perfectly suited her — a natural ginger through and through.

She is survived by her children, Liz Walbert Hausauer (North Sandwich, New Hampshire), Kate Walbert (Rafael Pelli, New York City), and Andrew Walbert (Wilmington, Delaware), as well as her grandchildren, Sam Hausauer (Gainesville, Florida), Katey Hausauer Swiger (Sammy Swiger, Tucson, Arizona), Delia Pelli-Walbert (Chicago, Illinois), and Iris Pelli-Walbert (Burlington, Vermont); great grandchildren Riley Hausauer, Boone Hausauer, Amelia Swiger, and Wilson Swiger; and her sister, Doris McConkey (Jackson, Michigan).

In lieu of flowers, please make any donations to the Villages Democratic Club:
<https://thevillagesdemocrats.com>

Tribute Wall

PW

“We were deeply saddened by the passing of such a wonderful woman. I was fortunate to know Donna through our bridge games, and I will always remember her for her grace, kindness, and that beautiful smile that brightened every room. My heartfelt condolences to her family. May you find comfort in the love she shared with all of us.” Pat and Mike Wissen

Pat Wissen - November 03, 2024 at 06:45 PM

GR

“Donna was one of the finest, classiest women I have ever met..she was so full of life and always smiling. I will never forget her kindness and her zest for life. I will miss her dearly.
Gigi Romagnano ❤️

Gigi Romagnano - November 03, 2024 at 02:38 PM

JH

“I want the family to know Donna was a fine Lady. I knew her in the Villages and played bridge with her. We shared the same political frustrations living in The Villages. Very intelligent and a no-nonsense woman always looked for her at the bridge tables. You guys were fortunate to have her in your lives. A life well-lived. John Janel Hebl

john hebl - November 03, 2024 at 07:57 AM