



Phyllis Constance MacMurrough

February 18, 1950 - January 13, 2024

Phyllis Constance MacMurrough was born on February 18, 1950, in Denver, Colorado and passed away from natural causes on January 13, 2024, at her home in Harris County, Texas. Phyllis was baptized and confirmed in the Lutheran Church and joins her parents, Montie Charles “Pete” MacMurrough and Frieda Otilie Sommerfeld MacMurrough, in eternal life.

Left to love, mourn, and remember Phyllis are her family and friends. She is survived by her sisters Victoria (Kenneth) Becker and Rosemary (Jamie) Rounds and brother John (Wiwik) MacMurrough. She was aunt and great aunt to many nieces and nephews: Elizabeth (Drew) Tinney and sons Owen and Knox; Jennifer (Craig) Behrns and daughters Ava and Brianna; Allison (Charles Adams) Gabbert and daughters Olivia, Stephanie and Kelly; Kathryn Haver and daughter Molly and son Jacob; Maureen (Ike Renner) Haver-Renner and son Wyatt; Michelle MacMurrough and John D. MacMurrough. She also leaves behind her beloved cats, Katrinka and Ranger, and the good friends she made in her senior living communities where she was affectionately known by the nickname Lisa.

In her youth, Phyllis took riding lessons and had a passion for horses. Throughout her life, she loved animals of all kinds, especially cats of all sizes

and temperaments. The British Invasion of the 1960s led to a lifelong love of the Rolling Stones and The Beatles. Growing up, her father's work took the family from Colorado to California to Washington and back to California before the family settled in the Memorial area of Houston, Texas, where Phyllis graduated from Westchester High School in 1969.

As an adult, Phyllis followed her parents to Europe, where she lived in The Hague, Netherlands and took great delight in traveling Europe by rail. With her mother and brother John, they drove to Berlin and were able to enter East Berlin at Checkpoint Charlie—an event that stood out in Phyllis' memory. Later travels to Israel and Egypt also made a profound impression on Phyllis. She returned stateside and ultimately settled in Texas near family. After graduating cum laude from the University of Houston- Downtown with a Bachelor of Science degree in professional writing with a minor in microbiology, Phyllis later enjoyed pursuing her master's degree at the University of Houston-Clear Lake. For a time, she worked in a microbiology lab at Smith Kline Beecham.

Phyllis was gifted with an extraordinary memory. She was a voracious reader and consumer of knowledge who loved learning about history, art, science, world cultures, and literature. She loved classic TV and current events. Needless to say, Phyllis was a Jeopardy savant and a formidable opponent in any game of trivia. Conversations with Phyllis could range from politics to religion to Egyptian history to Milton's Paradise Lost to Hemingway's six-toed cats. She possessed a unique eye for art and beauty—she loved bold and bright colors, art on her walls, and making a statement with fashion and jewelry.

It is an understatement to say there was no one quite like Phyllis. We loved

her deeply. We will miss her dearly. We hope and believe that she is truly free.

The family would like to extend their gratitude to Mr. Richard, Ms. Rashida, Ms. Jones, Ms. Britni, Mr. Z and all the others on her home health care team at Central Home Health Services of Texas for the dignified care and support they provided to Phyllis and our family these past few years. We'd also like to thank Ms. Banks with Total Care 2U for helping do the same.

Phyllis was an autistic person with a rare constellation of debilitating mental illnesses that impacted every facet of her life. The knowledge, resources, and standards of care that exist today were not within reach when Phyllis was growing up or navigating early adulthood. While loved and supported by her family, she experienced unkindness and ostracization by others during her childhood and as an adult. She carried the pain of being treated differently throughout her life.

While great strides have been made to empower people with autism, improve treatment for people with mental illness, and lift the stigma associated with both, more must still be done to improve access to resources and care that centers the individual and supports families. Those wishing to honor Phyllis' life and memory can also make donations in her name to Disability Rights Texas, the Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD, or the Houston SPCA. And most importantly, anyone can honor Phyllis by treating those who are different or disadvantaged with the kindness, dignity, and compassion they deserve.

A private family celebration of life will be held at 10:15 a.m., Saturday, January 20, 2024 at Joseph J Earthman Generations, 234 Westcott Street in Houston, Texas.

Tribute Wall

VM

“ Vicky McKeown lit a candle I loved Phyllis so much. She was my neighbor at Embark and we enjoyed cat's so much. Phyllis and I would walk together and feed the feral cats. No one really but Brenda and I talked with Phyllis and we knew she was so sweet. I often invited Phyllis into my apartment for hot chocolate and just tried to keep her talking. She loved President Trump and we talk for hours.



Yes, mental illness or just autism is horrible! I have two grandsons who are autistic and they're stared at or laughed at constantly! It is horrible. Nowadays it's not just young people who ARE NOT taught manners anymore, it is also ADULTS! People at the EMBARK SENIOR LIVING (now ELISON PARK) where Phyllis was living treated Phyllis so badly that they evicted her from there! I felt so sorry for Phyllis! No one recognized Phyllis had a medical problem. Just kapow... your out!

Phyllis, I will miss your kind gestures to me on my birthdays and our talks on President Trump! Oh, and I have another new kitty I named Squeaky and you'd love her! I found her the Sunday after Thanksgiving screaming for help and it took four adults two hours of running in freezing weather to catch her! Phyllis, I will keep rescuing all the cats I can and feeding them in your Honor, My Lovely Friend! I will miss you so much! Vicky

Vicky McKeown - January 19, 2024 at 12:00 AM

AG

“ All my love to my family. Aunt Phyllis had rough times, but she also was one of the smartest and wittiest women I knew. Some of her one-liners were the best I ever heard. We had a lot of fun times and I love you and will miss you Phyll Dyll. Alli

Allison Gabbert - January 18, 2024 at 09:16 PM