



Katherine "Kathie" Dudzinski

May 30, 2023

Katherine "Kathie" Whitcomb Dudzinski passed away at her home in Ft. Collins, Colorado during sunset on May 30, 2023, surrounded by her immediate family. She is preceded in death by her parents, Ben and Peggy, brother Benji, sister-in-law, Una Whitcomb, and brother in law Andrew Dudzinski. She is survived by husband Paul, son Mark (Miriam Ban), and daughter Teresa "T" (Ron Johnson), her grandchildren Eliza Maleski, Gábor and Iliamna Ban Dudzinski, sister Judy, brother Stuart, many nieces, nephews, and extended family members.

Kathie was a huge, compassionate force, with a big heart and more optimism than perhaps any person we have known. Her sparkly smile would light up the room, always so welcoming even at first meeting. She always wanted the best for everyone, making sure people had what they needed, whether they knew they needed it or not. She was all about experience and connection, attention to detail, and big picture. Rarely at loss for words, it was usually less about her and more about others in an attempt to connect us all. She was truly the embodiment of six degrees of separation. Kathie wanted to share her experiences for all the joys and wonders they brought her - desiring to share that with everyone she met. A fabulous cheerleader and optimist, she encouraged people to pursue their dreams and best selves. Not one to disparage others, she would look for the good in everyone. She was everyone's champion. Ever desiring for people to be comfortable and at

home, she was always welcoming, even when not feeling herself. Rarely admitting to pain or discomfort, she was a master of putting everyone else first. The limits of her powerful and quiet strength were really only seen at the end of her remarkable and beautiful life. We will miss all that she was, yet know she travels on with us, reminding us daily that we are all connected to each other and the planet.

At her request, there will be a party in her honor later this summer. For those unable to attend, have an adventure, gather with family, go on a bike ride, a hike, a ski, enjoy time with friends or family, raise a glass, take a class, enjoy nature, whatever it is that brings you joy, and think of her. Pass on the kindness and connection. Please feel free to add thoughts, pictures or videos here related to Kathie, and In lieu of flowers or if you are interested in doing something in her name, here are some suggestions.

Memorial suggestions:

Planting or donating a tree Memorial bench

Donation to NoCo Community Foundation Donation to your favorite charity in Kathie's name

Kathie's Life:

Born Katherine Frances Whitcomb to Dr. Benjamin B. and Margaret Pike Whitcomb in Hartford, CT on 11/11/1941, she was also welcomed by her older brother Stu. She was followed by her sister Judy and little brother, Benji. The 6 Whitcombs had many good times with extended family and friends throughout the Northeast over the years. She graduated from Oxford School in Hartford and attended Wheaton College, graduating in the class of 1963. There she forged lifelong friendships and lasting memories. After college, she joined the Army as a 2nd lieutenant and was ultimately stationed in Denver as a first lieutenant where she completed her training as a physical therapist. She was working at Fitzsimmons hospital in September 1964 when she met Paul

Dudzinski, a surgeon and captain in the Army. He was a Polish refugee of WWII who had recently emigrated from Argentina. As they had lunch on a September day in 1964, she was intrigued by this adventurous fellow. They started courting and she said to herself, "Oooh, this is going to be good!", she was right. That Christmas he managed to get enough leave to travel back east to meet Kathie's parents and ask her father for her hand in marriage. As a Christmas gift, Dr. Whitcomb enjoyed giving Paul a very large, wrapped box

which contained a series of smaller wrapped boxes, one within the other. In the final box, to everyone's amusement was a glove with a note reading, "My Daughter's Hand". Kathie and Paul were thrilled to be engaged and they married the following March, 1965 starting a nearly 60 year adventure together. Early days included Canyonlands off-road fun in their converted VW bus with a Corvair engine, skiing, hiking and mountaineering in the Colorado Rockies, trips to South America, and across the US.

In 1968 they welcomed their son Mark, and 20 months later their daughter Teresa (T). The family moved to Ft. Collins, building their home and settling in. Wonderful parents, they were determined to continue their adventurous ways. The two children soon found themselves in kid-carriers, on skis, on bikes, on hikes, in boats on the lake, and out in the mountains from times before they can remember. Family adventures and travels were the norm, a tradition that is continued with the next generation. A cases in point, Kathie body-surfing on her 70th birthday with her, then 10 year old, granddaughter Eliza or riding stoker on the tandem at 80 years of age with her son and 2 year old grandson.

Kathie returned to her work as a PT in the early 1980's in the Poudre R-1 schools working with students and then continued in private practice until the 1990's. She very much enjoyed working with children, particularly those with

cerebral palsy.

She and Paul retired in the late 1990's and their new endeavors were to bike, ski, travel and see the world with family and friends. They made the most of their "golden years" and have incredible memories - with Kathie's copious photos serving as lasting reminders. She and Paul also volunteered medically overseas in Vietnam and South America. They forged new friendships and took on new activities in the OLLI (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute) programs at CSU. Classical music enthusiasts, she and Paul supported the Fort Collins symphony and often would seek out concerts during their travels. Kathie renewed her interest in playing the piano, taking instruction, and having recitals for a number of years. She also enjoyed her yoga and Tai-Chi practice, book group, and was a dedicated PT patient - faithful in her exercises until the very end.

For almost 60 years Kathie and Paul have been constant companions, playmates, parents, travelers, adventurers, and soul mates. They have stood by each other sharing their lives and the lives of their children and grandchildren, extended family, and many, many friends. She knew how lucky she was and wanted that same fortune for everyone. Paul stood by her side, even as lung cancer wrested her away. He continues his adventuring at her behest and wishes.

We wish to thank everyone for all of the help, love, company, food, support, and kindness over the years, particularly during the last few months. Kathie wanted you all to know how grateful she was and that she loved you all. We are so lucky to have such wonderful and dedicated family members, friends, and neighbors. Sincere thanks to her Pathways Hospice care team, your care of Kathie and our family made a difficult time and process easier to bear. Special thanks to Brad Ott, the other therapists and staff at Rebound, and to Cathy Brown Berry. Kathie worked so hard to keep her body functioning and

relatively pain-free under your direction. Thank you to everyone that touched Kathie's life, she will have remembered you all.

In her memory: Live well, adventure on, be kind to all you meet, and remember we are all connected.

Tribute Wall

ZT

“ 2 files added to the album Oxford 50th Reunion



Zelie Tourais - October 17, 2023 at 03:35 PM

NR

“ Kathie was my closest and best friend, from the day we met as freshmen at Wheaton, through the many, many years of our friendship. I miss her terribly, and can only imagine what a terrible loss this is to all of her wonderful family. I will add photos when I figure out how to do it, but for now, I send condolences and love to Paul, Mark, T, and all the family, and wish I were with you today, at the celebration of her life. Nancy Hirschland Ramage

Nancy Ramage - July 26, 2023 at 05:00 PM

CP

“ Kathie was my Dad's cousin. As a boy at our family gatherings I remember her as that bubbly, effervescent character we all love. Flash forward to my move to Colorado and I was welcomed into her home and heart. Always the gracious hostess, Kathie's spread around the dinner table would evoke much cheerful banter. It is written that there is no mourning in Heaven; with Kathie now there she will help make sure of it!

Chris Pike - July 26, 2023 at 12:25 PM

MD

“*Condolences to Paul, Mark and T and all their extended family in the US. We have so many fond memories of Kathie, of Auntie Kathie, of Great Aunt Kathie, of sister-in-law Kathie and, of course, Chatty Kathie so named in a magazine article after a trip in Patagonia. We miss all the Kathie's. Your smile and caring manner. We have remembrances of a wonderful Black Sea Cruise, of the family holidays we spent in Colorado, of the time in Maine waiting for the first step by a man on the moon, and the biking trips. You were always there making sure everyone was OK and enjoying themselves. And when you ventured North to go Heli skiing or biking we enjoyed hosting you (wearing our red Dudzinski family ball caps you brought us - thanks again Kath!) A perfect considerate guest!*

Much love from the Canadian cousins - Mila, Paul and Sandy, Marissa and Rob, and grand nephews Ross and Peter.

Take care - we miss you and are thinking of you all.

Mila Dudzinski - July 22, 2023 at 05:37 PM

MD

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Take care - we miss you and are thinking of you all.

Mila Dudzinski - July 22, 2023 at 08:05 AM

GH

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Ginny Hooper - July 17, 2023 at 06:52 PM



“ Thank you Kathie for being a lifelong source of inspiration and loving auntie!! We love you so much. Thank you for sharing your love and spirit of adventure with us. I'm so grateful that you shared your world and your travels with us, giving us some amazing childhood memories! Because you were so active, generous, and caring throughout your life, you served as a beacon to others even when they were struggling. I know you inspired Dad at moments when he felt weak. You helped him be strong when it was hard to have hope. And thus through your life and your example, you have strengthened us all with the power of your love. I love you so much, and I know you will have many more adventures ahead!



Rose Whitcomb - July 15, 2023 at 07:06 PM



“ 5 files added to the tribute wall



Rose Whitcomb - July 15, 2023 at 06:52 PM

AR

“ I have so many wonderful memories: Oxford, the record of the Octopipers, riving home in the plaid topped convertable., Chuch fellowship, Camp Winnemont, train trip to New to visit our counselor. Sailing into Buzzards Bay on her fathers boat, My Maid of Honor, Visits in Boston when she came up from Wheaton, Visit at he Cape with Paul and Mark, Lunch at Logan Airport on her Way back from Maine,, Lunch in Worcester after her piano course, Phone calls to celebrate birthdays and, anniversaries Flowers for our 50th - just to name a few

Anne Reiley - July 14, 2023 at 11:48 AM

KO

“ spring leaves emerge
whispers of cherished moments
depart with the north wind

- with all my love,
kobi



kobi - July 13, 2023 at 07:12 PM

DL

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Dania Leslie - July 13, 2023 at 01:56 AM

PH

“ 2 files added to the album Memories Album

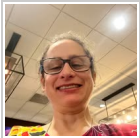


Penny Hillman - July 10, 2023 at 02:55 PM

SS

“ *I was blessed to know Kathie as a lover of the arts, therapist, mother, biker & friend. She was an enlightening & joyful soul. Sharyn & Larry Salmen*

Sharyn Salmen - July 09, 2023 at 01:58 PM



“ *Kathie was always so loving and caring and had a smile on her face always. She was a fighter in the end. She really enjoyed her family and grandkids and being with family. So enjoyed Thanksgiving in Bellingham with her and the family and Miriam and Mark's wedding party in Fort Collins. She will be missed dearly. Love from Julia Ban Miriam's sister and Mark's sister in law.*

Julia Ban - July 09, 2023 at 10:42 AM

SF

“ *Our deepest condolences on the loss of Kathie. We will always remember her happy, positive, and warm self to everyone she knew. We know as a family you will continue to be that and hold her close to your heart as she will always be with you. May all your memories celebrate her life. It was a gift to know her...we will miss her deeply. With love, Susan, David, Lauren, and Paul Jensen*

Susan Jensen and family - July 09, 2023 at 09:14 AM

CO

Kathie was always the kindest of Moms when driving us to swim practice and herding us around and out of bounds at Vail. Her world-class smile and genuine curiosity about all things around her were contagious. Years later, at the bank, she was always vocal about what a great job the team was doing for her when she and Paul deserved thanks for being the best of customers and people. Kathie was one of the people we should all credit for reminding us that attitude, hard work, and positive thinking drive so much of our experience and, most importantly, the experience we offer others. Her gifts certainly carried forward with Mark and T and the rest of us so lucky to know her. - Chris Osborn

Chris Osborn - July 10, 2023 at 02:56 PM

DW

Kathy was an extraordinary individual whose memory I hold dear and strive to emulate. Her radiant attitude and unwavering warmth, even in the face of adversity, set her apart. I vividly recall visiting her at the Vail hospital following a devastating bike accident, for which she bore no fault. Despite the immense challenges ahead in her recovery, she greeted me with laughter and lightheartedness, exuding an unwavering confidence in her ability to overcome. I left that encounter in awe of her indomitable spirit.

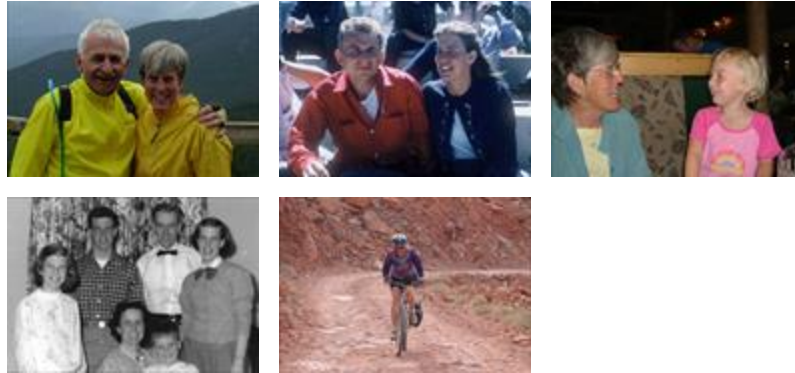
Kathy lived life to the fullest, embracing each moment with contagious enthusiasm and effervescent energy. She was a unique force for good, and her absence leaves a void that will be deeply felt. Her unwavering positivity and zest for life served as an invaluable example to us all.

In cherishing Kathy's memory, I am inspired to approach life with the same unwavering optimism and resilience. Her legacy serves as a constant reminder to embrace challenges with a smile, and to spread warmth and kindness wherever I go. Kathy's impact on those who knew her is immeasurable, and she will forever be missed. Dave Wolf

David O Wolf - July 10, 2023 at 05:01 PM



“ 20 files added to the album Memories Album



Goes Funeral Care & Crematory - July 08, 2023 at 12:19 PM

JH

“ I was blessed to call Kathie a friend, and mourn her passing. She always brought a smile to my face, and I truly cherished the time that we spent together. My sincere condolences to Paul, Mark, T, and their families. Kathie was a wonderful soul! ❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️

June Holmstrom - July 07, 2023 at 06:51 PM

SF

Our deepest condolences on the loss of Kathie. We will always remember her happy, positive, and warm self to everyone she knew. We know as a family you will continue to be that and hold her close to your heart as she will always be with you. May all your memories celebrate her life. It was a gift to know her...we will miss her deeply. With love, Susan, David, Lauren and Paul Jensen

Susan Jensen and family - July 09, 2023 at 09:04 AM

DL

Open, smiling Kathie, with always a loving approach to everyone. A truly remarkable trusting- to- love kind of person. What an inspiration to us all. Thank you for being born and touching my life.
Dania

Dania Leslie - July 13, 2023 at 02:14 AM

KW

Our wonderful memories and connection with Kathie were born through family. Mark was a best friend to our son Curt and they shared the 5:30 A.M. experience of the Poudre HS swim team and big spaghetti suppers before meets. We are so blessed to have shared family sports- the notorious ice broom ball, BRRRR Thank you for the great gift of warm, positive family friendship.

With the fondest of memories, Karen & Tom Weitkunat

Karen Weitkunat - July 16, 2023 at 07:23 PM

GH

I join the legions who treasured Kathie's unfailing smile and limitless ability to radiate positivity, see the good in any situation, find all the fun and joy and opportunity in every day! She could always be counted on in college, when labs, papers and exams loomed, for that smile and pop of energy that kept you going! Her beaming smile was the last thing my husband and I saw as we pulled away from our wedding reception! I'll try to find a way to post a picture elsewhere on this site. We lived far apart during our child rearing years but when our oldest went to CU, she and Paul threw open their doors for some visits. And over the years we've watched in awe those skiing in the Bug-a-loos, cycling through Europe and elsewhere trips and rejoiced in those college reunion gatherings! Emails made keeping in touch easier, thankfully! I am grateful for them, will treasure them and will miss them!

Ginny and Bick Hooper

Ginny Hooper - July 17, 2023 at 06:46 PM

MG

Kathie spread happiness wherever she went. Her smile and laughter would fill a room. We shared fun filled days heli skiing and bike touring. Carry on with your next adventure Kathie.

Marg Gmoser

Margaret Gmoser - July 18, 2023 at 08:52 AM