



Gwendolyn Marie Wagner

December 15, 1961 - August 11, 2023

In Loving Memory of Gwendolyn Wagner With heavy and sorrowful hearts, we announce the passing of Gwendolyn Wagner, who peacefully departed on Friday, August 11th. Gwendolyn, lovingly known as Gwen or Gwennie, was a woman of unparalleled and unwavering strength, compassion, and faith. Throughout her life, she touched the hearts of many, leaving an indelible mark on those fortunate enough to have known her.

The youngest of eight siblings, Gwen was born to older parents, John and Celeste (Sally) Wagner, on December 15, 1961, in Watertown, SD. As the darling of her parents and community, Gwen developed confidence in her skills and abilities. She enhanced her interest in culinary arts by cooking dinner for her father every night. She honed her sales skills by regularly negotiating with her dad for candy money. Her entrepreneurial spirit developed from her paper route at the age of ten as she collected payments, socialized with adults, and loved every dog and cat she met on the way. Golf, basketball, and swimming led to a lifetime commitment to fitness. Her love and talent for music stemmed from playing the piano, trumpet, and organ, and she sang in school and church choirs. Gwen was a superb hostess, stemming from her parties galore in the infamous Wagner basement where friends sneaked treats, like Hydrox dessert, from the freezer, her parents' card parties where she served food, and Super Bowl parties where she would serve specially designed cakes. She carried her love for entertaining into adulthood. The children she babysat loved the games in which she engaged them. As

she worked with her mother at the nursing home, she learned compassion for those who were compromised. Her love for family, friends, sales, pets, entertainment, sports, and music began early in life, only to be enhanced as she grew.

After graduating from Augustana College in 1984, Gwen followed her sister Mary to Sacramento via a short stint in Phoenix. Gwen became an active member of St John's Church in Folsom and found a job in sales. She never imagined a cold-calling sales job for telephone systems would launch her into a lifelong sales career. She became a student of personality assessment tools such as Myers-Briggs, Enneagrams, and Strength Finders. Growing in her leadership skills, she left Sacramento in the late 1980s to work for PacTel in the Bay Area, where she became a sales trainer. Eventually, she took her well-honed skills in Sales Training and created her own successful business named Wagner Works. Gwen brought her personal self to all things business. Her very essence was curious, committed, clear, and kind. Gwen was a natural leader, an excellent communicator, and an advocating collaborator. Her colleagues and clients gained so much from knowing her and working with her.

A profound turning point in Gwen's life occurred in her late 20s when she crossed paths with Keith Bloss, who became her husband of 30 years. They were married in 1993, settling in Livermore, California, before moving to Tracy, where they would reside from 1994 to 2009. As their marriage life grew, Keith marveled at the force of nature that was Gwen. Keith compared the journey to reaching the crest of an amazing rollercoaster and anticipating the thrill of what would come. He realized early on how committed Gwen was to family and relationships. Their love story was one of true partnership, built on a foundation of unyielding respect, support, and commitment. Gwen and Keith established an exceptional ability to communicate, relate, and share the ups and downs of life. Gwen loved Keith with a deep desire to see him flourish in his faith, friendships, family, and work. Gwen and Keith had a way of making each other laugh every day, employing impressions, quoting favorite movie

lines, and surprising each other with witty remarks. Humor was their love language. In recent years they developed a knack for improv; Gwen spoke with Henrietta Chicken (voiced by Keith), a proper British stuffed puppet with a penchant for Muscatel. Later in their marriage, they enjoyed working and volunteering together, sharing roles in church events and business classes, and vacationing with family. Gwen and Keith's 30 year journey together was nothing short of remarkable. Their bond was a testament to the enduring and ever-growing power of love.

Gwen mothered 2 children, first embracing her role as a stepmother to Keith's son, Stephen Bloss. Gwen embraced her role with grace and support towards Stephen. Her approach was characterized by positivity, open communication, patience, and leading by example. She created a safe, judgment-free home and fostered Stephen's sense of security and trust through gentle guidance and encouraging his work ethic. When Gwen founded Wagner Works, Stephen saw firsthand the challenges and rewards of self-employment. Beyond the home, Gwen integrated Stephen into the Wagner family, expanding his support network with numerous relatives and providing a deep sense of belonging and confidence. Her belief in his limitless potential resonated in every interaction, solidifying her commitment and regarding him as her own son.

Four years into her marriage with Keith, she gave birth to their son, Jack Bloss. Gwen was constantly present throughout Jack's childhood, always supporting and encouraging his many endeavors, including soccer, baseball, and basketball. Whether attending or scorekeeping, Gwen always brought the loudest cheers, chanting, "Go Jacky Wacky!" Gwen instilled a strong work ethic in Jack, always encouraging him to fulfill his responsibilities and complete his assignments in school. Gwen's love for hosting impacted Jack through the gathering and intertwining of various friend groups over the years. Often, Jack invited his friends to these gatherings, and they quickly became closer to his mother than to him. Throughout his life, Gwen found countless

opportunities to express her love for Jack through gifts, affirmations, letters, and sacrifices (such as offering to play 1 hour of Monopoly every year despite her deep hatred of the game). She loved any chance she had to spend with Jack. After Jack moved out, she always made sure the next opportunity to connect was on the calendar. Connection with her boys was one of her greatest joys. Jack and Stephen were both given the opportunity to flourish through Gwen's motherly love and guidance.

Gwen's devotion to family started with each of her seven siblings. Their love for each other was unwavering and inspirational to all. The eight siblings got together over 40 times for family reunions, weddings, and assorted gatherings following Gwen's departure from her childhood home. Gwen cherished her standing family call once a month and weekly call with her sisters. Her nephews, nieces, and sons marveled at the relationship these eight siblings had and delighted in the chance to experience it at family reunions. Gwen's siblings were one of her dearest treasures, and her nieces and nephews were one of her greatest delights. Raised Catholic, Gwen had a constant curiosity for God. Gwen recalled being mysteriously struck with the realization that God is alive and everywhere one day while viewing a Magic Eye book. Her curiosity drove her further into a desire for a relationship with Jesus, supported by her friends and family. Following the attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001, Gwen became involved at First Presbyterian Church in Tracy. After moving to Vancouver, Washington, in 2009, Gwen, Keith, and Jack became involved at East Woods Presbyterian Church. During this time, a book called "The Shack" by William Paul Young had a profound impact on her view of God, revealing a deeply personal and loving God who would meet her in her joys, sufferings, and shortcomings. East Woods Presbyterian Church fostered and flamed her expanding desire to serve Jesus. Gwen then found, in a profoundly tangible way, the unwavering, unfailing, expansive love of Jesus through the Walk to Emmaus. Gwen's response to anything impactful was to dive deeper into it and find ways to share it. She led classes and retreats at East Woods, employing a wide range of content from Bob Goff to

Andy Griffith. She became the Worship Elder, the Youth Elder, and the manager of a full church remodel. She also became a Stephen's Minister, learning to walk closely with those experiencing hardship. She volunteered with Family Promise, CEDEPCA, Walk to Emmaus, Bridgetown Ministries, and many more local and international organizations.

Gwen's passion for music was well-known to her family and friends, and she used it as a tool of vibrant expression. She loved to play the piano, a joy that was re-invigorated later in life. Gwen was involved in several choirs and sought out opportunities to lead worship services incorporating both hymns and contemporary songs at East Woods and the Walk to Emmaus. Gwen's expression through music was tied just as tightly to the artists to whom she listened. A typical Gwen playlist would include Earth, Wind, and Fire, Elton John, Chris Tomlin, John Denver, the Barenaked Ladies, Josh Groban, Pink Martini, Michael Buble, the Lumineers, David Crowder, and countless more. Always a marvelous host, Gwen ensured the perfect soundtrack was present for any gathering. A tradition that formed among her siblings was to write a song for each sibling on a decadal birthday. In her usual go-getter way, Gwen spearheaded this tradition, helping to pick the melody, write the lyrics, and, most importantly, hold the tune. The latest sibling song to be composed was for Gwen's 60th Birthday, written to the tune: "What a Wonderful World," retitled "What a Wonderful Girl."

Along the common threads of connection and relationships woven through her life, Gwen was a woman who effortlessly maintained deep and meaningful connections with a staggering number of friends. Her ability to keep up with and nurture these friendships was awe-inspiring. Her circle of friends extended far and wide, a testament to her magnetic personality, genuine kindness, and sincere interest in the lives of others. Her far-reaching community is proof of the power she wielded in gathering people together in friendship.

One cannot speak of Gwen without mentioning her love for animals. Growing up in South Dakota, she developed a life-long affinity for the bison, garnishing

her home with bison décor and even imprinting her right forearm with a bison tattoo. Gwen and Keith's home was forever a safe haven for their many pet, which rarely numbered less than two at any time. Many of Gwen's pets were rescues or were given to her by friends or family who needed to find a new home for their furry loved one and knew Gwen and Keith's was the right place to send them. Gwen faithfully and lovingly cared for all her furry family members and converted many folks to see the value of pets.

Gwen was the host of parties, the facilitator of learning and self-discovery, the creator and connector of friendships, the administrator of fun, the celebrator of birthdays and anniversaries, the glue and technological guru of her family, and the mother and mentor of many. She was a teacher, encourager, listener, and truth-teller. She was a sincere friend. She was a leader everywhere she went. Where things were stagnant, she initiated action. Where things were broken, she sought redemption. Where things were without hope, she brought light, laughter, and beauty. She radiated warmth, welcomed others with open arms, and created an atmosphere of acceptance and understanding. She loved youth, young adults, peers, and elders. She loved those on the streets and those at the top of the corporate ladder. She loved family, friends, and strangers. She was an emblem of the redemptive and restorative power of God which transcends the walls that often divide.

Gwen Wagner's journey on this earth may have come to an end, but she lives on in the mystery of paradise after death. She leaves behind her beloved husband, Keith Bloss; her son, Jack Bloss (Jessie Bloss); her stepson, Stephen Bloss (Caleb Gray); her siblings, Robert (Bob) Wagner (Carol Wagner), Charles (Chuck) Wagner (Patti Wagner), Ralph Wagner (Debbie Wagner), John Wagner (Nancy Wagner), Jeanne Hewitt (Jim Hewitt), Mary Lambert (Jim Lambert), Julie Heiman (preceded in death by Jerry Heiman) and the many friends and family members who were touched by her grace. Gwen's love and legacy will continue to inspire us all.

Rest in peace, dear Gwen. You are a shining example of the beauty that love,

compassion, and faith can bring to the world. Your absence leaves a void that can never be filled, and your memory will live on in those who knew you. The joy you brought us will forever resonate in our hearts. May you delight in all that you experience on the other side of death. We will see you there.

Gwen's Celebration of Life was held on September 16th. The recording of the service can be found at jackbloss.com/gwen.

Tribute Wall



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Evergreen Memorial Gardens - July 03, 2025 at 05:10 PM



“ Gwennie and I were life long friends. We met in Kindergarten and remained close from second grade on. She provided me with confidence I didn't really have. Her smile lit up every room.

I miss her so much, but also feel like she is literally a part of me and with me each day.

One of my fondest childhood memories was sneaking out at night to lay on the Clark South Dakota golf green at midnight, counting the stars and pondering the meaning of life.

Sharon Ray - January 24, 2024 at 12:00 AM

AK

“Gwen. I think of you every day.
I loved our history but thought we'd have many more pages to add. I loved how you laughed at everything, found the light and humor of the everyday. You noticed and graced so much.
I never told you this but the lyrics from Nicole Nordeman's song *Every Season* always reminded me of you -- I felt you could have written it. The song talks about change and our walk with the Lord through all our seasons. We remember you now in our Winter of time together and through the lyrics --

*"And everything in time and under Heaven
Finally falls asleep
Wrapped in blankets white, all creation
Shivers underneath
And still I notice You when branches crack
And in my breath on frosted glass
Even now in death, You open doors for life to enter"*

I know Gwen, your spirit lives and shines on. Your light could open doors for all to enter with your open arms and heart. And I will remember that and give all glory to God. Thank you friend. I love you.

Anna Kirkeby - January 10, 2024 at 12:00 AM

JH

“Gwen was born when I was 16 and I went away to school when I was 18 so do not have many memories of her when she was young. In 1969 I returned home unannounced after two years in Germany unannounced. Gwen was sitting at the piano and I joined her on the bench. She looked up at me and said, "Who are you?"

Obviously, we were together through the years at weddings, some holidays, and other gatherings, but it wasn't until 1983 that we sealed our bond. She had taken a job house sitting on Long Island; however, the lady never left and thought Gwen should be a maid complete with a black dress and white apron. At the time my husband was teaching at West Point, so she bailed on the job, hopped a bus north, and joined us for the summer. That time together solidified a special sister love that continues forever.

During that summer Jim was transferred to Fort Meade outside Baltimore and she moved with us. While we were waiting for housing she, my two small kids, and I drove to western North Dakota for a large Wagner reunion. I had taught her how to drive with a standard transmission and remember her not wanting to leave the interstate as she would have to downshift.

We returned to Maryland where she stayed for a few more weeks and then returned to school. I was lost without my buddy! In '84 or '85 she invited just her three sisters to California for a visit. This started our gathering over 15 times to Carmel, Sacramento, Mt Shasta, Seattle, Spokane, Bigfork, San Antonio, my home in Texas and Japan. It was always long conversation on a myriad of topics and a few glasses of wine. Gwen travelled with her laptop and would research any questions that arose. Also our siblings have met in many, many places. Gwen always added special touches each time.

During Covid she organized the siblings on Web-X to stay in touch. She had great patience getting a few technology challenged sibs connected time after time. This led to family zooming for birthdays

involving long conversations for a couple of hours about memories of growing up and a variety of topics. For two years the sisters have zoomed every Thursday afternoon. Despite how busy she was, Gwen was always there with some new podcast, speaker or idea to discuss. We continue without her. It is not the same

To say she is missed is profound. She was a treasure we were fortunate to have in our lives leaving an endless amount of wonderful times in our memory bank.

Love you, Gwenie Poo,

*Jeanie Beanie
Her nickname for me*

PS: When the sisters quit dying their hair, Gwen was empathetic that she would NEVER let her red hair go. She kept her promise.

Jeanne Hewitt - December 21, 2023 at 12:00 AM

JB

“ We decided to go for a walk. Some walk on sidewalks, roads, or trails, but ours was more adventurous than that. It was mid-September, and Lake Tahoe had advanced beyond its temperature crest in the low 60's. It was not 60 anymore. We walked out into the water. The south side of the lake was incredibly shallow, and as we walked, we found that it wasn't getting any deeper. A 1/4 mile in, and the water was only knee deep. As we walked, we processed life. All kinds of things. It was friendship at its finest. Struggles were shared, tears were shed, and eventually, the water was at our waists. We intended to submerge in the water entirely, but after nearly 1/2 mile of walking, we became convinced that the lake would never deepen. The only option was to squat down if we wanted to go under. As I said, the water was not quite 60 degrees. We laughed away the fear of dropping down, often looking to the other to start counting down, only to shy away from it again. But eventually, one of us counted, and we both went down. We re-emerged full of the force of life that Tahoe water and rich friendship can bring. We laughed and hugged. We walked back slowly, reluctant to leave the moment.

Jack Bloss - November 26, 2023 at 12:00 AM

KB

“Gwen and I shared the same favorite movie; *"It's a Wonderful Life"* starring Jimmy Stewart. We my have watched it 50 times in our 34 years together. Like all touching scenes in movies or even commercials that we'd watched many many times, when Peter Bailey says of his brother *"To my brother, George, the richest man in town!"*, I'd have to hide my tears. Not my dear wife. After many years, I'd look at her tear-filled eyes and most times she'd look back at me and say *"That gets ya right in the boo boo"*. And in recent years I stopped hiding that emotion. Gwen understood the impact of a life well lived as outlined exquisitely in Jimmy Stewart's character, George Bailey. Because she lived this wild and emotionally positive life, I referred to her as *"Filly"*. This too soon departure of this wonderful, loving being tears deeply on this first Thanks Giving Day without her. The grief is mind numbing and I know it's shared by a multitude. She loved our Lord fiercely. I'll lean completely into that today.

Keith Bloss - November 24, 2023 at 12:00 AM

MK

“ A sweet memory of Gwen was when she told me about one of her own precious memories, when her and Keith and Jack visited New York City when Jack was only eight years old. She smiled and laughed when she told me about how they were standing for hours in Times Square in the cold climate of New Years, waiting for the ball to drop. Later when they came back to their hotel room, she felt Jack's hands that were frozen as icicles, and couldn't believe his dedication!

This story is a testament to her deep fondness of her son, Jack. She didn't just love him, she loved the person he turned out to be. She was his mom but also his friend, and his biggest supporter in everything. And I thank her for raising such an awesome, God fearing guy that I get to call my friend.

Gwen was someone I would be overjoyed to see after long stretches of time, but it felt like we hadn't even missed a day because she was so easy to talk to. She was a naturally confident, self assured, authoritative figure in my life, and I strived to soak up every bit of knowledge she threw my way. She gave the best hugs. She threw an event like no other. She was someone you wanted in your corner. I will miss her very much, but I know she's thriving now more than ever. I love you, Gwen.

Madeline Konswa - November 22, 2023 at 12:00 AM

AW

“ We are deeply sorry for your loss ~ Evergreen Memorial Gardens Cemetery, Funeral Chapel and Crematory

A Memorial Tree was planted for Gwendolyn Marie Wagner - November 19, 2023 at 12:00 AM