



Gretchen Burns Roose

OCT 25, 1921 - FEB 7, 2020



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Gretchen Roose Obituary

Gretchen Burns Roose, 98, passed away February 7, 2020 in her residence at the Kendal of Oberlin continuing care community following a brief illness surrounded by her loving family. She was born October 25, 1921 in Two Harbors, Minnesota and was the third of four children to Dr. Rush Leslie Burns and Ruth Harriet Burns. In the 1930s, Gretchen's family moved from Minnesota to southern California. After graduating from Westwood High School, she enrolled at UCLA where she received her BA in English Literature in 1943. She met her future husband, Kenneth Davis Roose, at a Methodist Church retreat in San Anselmo, California in 1939. She and Ken married in Washington, DC June 12, 1942 and were married for 73 years until Ken passed away in 2016. In 1950, Gretchen, Ken and their children (Tina, Kirk and Deborah) moved to Oberlin, Ohio, where Ken had accepted a teaching position in economics at Oberlin College. They had their fourth child, Paul, in 1953. In 1961 the family moved to Rochester, Michigan where Gretchen was active in the League of Women Voters and the American Association of University Women. They moved to State College, PA in 1964 when Ken became an administrator at Pennsylvania State University and Gretchen added the role of dean's wife to her portfolio. In 1968, she and Ken moved with their last child, Paul, living at home, to Bethesda, Maryland. In 1970, Ken retired from academia and the "empty-nest" couple moved to Fort Lauderdale, Florida to pursue Ken's lifelong passion for a tennis-focused lifestyle. The couple also had a home in Castle Park, Michigan that they used as a family gathering place until they sold it as they began spending more time at Kendal at Oberlin. Gretchen and Ken moved into Kendal in the early 1990s and she proudly wore her Kendal "Founder" badge until the end. "Mom was an activist for much of her life and remained interested and engaged in social justice and political issues until her death, including reading the New York Times every day,"



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her daughter Tina Roose said. “She led her university YWCA and later her area League of Women Voters (LWV) in south Florida, educating, advocating and lobbying for voting rights, environmental protections, women’s rights, and reproductive rights.” She strongly supported progressive politicians, especially women. Gretchen volunteered as a children’s librarian. “She had a lifelong love of books, passing it on to her children, grandchildren and many others,” said her daughter Deborah Roose. “Her love of books and learning was a central inspiration for my becoming a teacher educator and my sister’s career as a librarian.” Known as the family communicator, Gretchen worked tirelessly throughout her life building relationships with family members. “Our mom was the glue that bound the family together even though we are spread out geographically,” said her son Paul Roose, an arbitrator and mediator. “Nothing in life gave her more joy than to facilitate relationships between members of her immediate family, extended family, and friends. She was a master at it.” Gretchen is survived by daughters, Tina (wife, Teresa Guajardo) Roose of Olympia, WA and Deborah (husband, David Snyder) Roose of Oberlin, OH; son, Paul (wife, Anne Lawrence) Roose of Oakland, CA; daughter-in-law Diana Roose of Oberlin OH; grandchildren, Carl Roose, Dain Roose-Snyder, Beirne Roose-Snyder, Emily Marsh, Carolyn Roose Eagle, and Kevin Roose; and great- grandchildren, Wesley Keller, Bayard Keller and Vivian Marsh. In addition to her husband and parents, she is preceded in death by a son, Kirk, a social security disability attorney, in 2018; brother David Burns; and sisters, Ruth Douglass and Betsy Washburn. A memorial service will be June 20, 2020 at 2:00 pm at Kendal at Oberlin, 600 Kendal Drive, Oberlin. Memorial contributions may be made to League of Women Voters <https://www.lwv.org/> or the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) <https://www.fcnl.org/>. Memorial Service Kendal at Oberlin Saturday, June 20, 2020 2:00 PM 600 Kendal Dr. Oberlin, OH 44074

To send flowers
to the family or plant a tree
in memory of Gretchen Burns Roose, please visit our floral store.

Read More



Tribute Wall

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George M Shupp posted:

It has been one of the pleasures in my life to be of service to both Kenneth and Gretchen. Both were very special people. Enjoyed speaking with them and hearing about their life accomplishments They will be missed George

March 17 at 8:00 PM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Gretchen by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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