MELANIE LEWIS
1953 - 2014 | Obituary | Condolences

Melanie Lewis
Jan. 6, 1953 - Sept. 7, 2014
Berkeley
Melanie Pearl Lewis died Sept. 7 at her home in Berkeley, more than 11 years after her first cancer diagnosis. The oldest child of James and Isabelle (Sheetz) Lewis, she was born Jan. 6, 1953, in Virginia. The family later moved to Chapel Hill, North Carolina, where her two siblings were born. Melanie earned a B.A. in anthropology at the University of North Carolina. She then lived on Nantucket Island for several years, before returning to Chapel Hill to begin an honors graduate program, also in anthropology. In 1980, she moved to San Francisco and later settled in Berkeley.

There, Melanie met the love of her life, Julian Boyd, a professor in the English Department at UC Berkeley. They were together more than 23 years, marrying on March 21, 1989. Julian preceded her in death in 2005. Melanie worked for an innovative preschool that provided childcare for mothers recovering from drug and alcohol addiction as well as the Berkeley Public Library and the Homeless Youth Alliance in San Francisco. She also wrote poetry and in 2010 published an online collection of poems through her blog Call and Response.

Melanie was a lifelong reader, especially fond of British fiction. She was also passionate about knitting and in the 1990s published a baby blanket pattern in a national knitting magazine. She was often seen on campus or at the marina, taking long walks with her dog, Lulu. On April 1, 2014, Melanie celebrated 35 years of sobriety, during which time she was an inspiration to many.

She is survived by her brother, Timothy (Gillian) Lewis, and daughter, Olivia Pearl; on Nantucket Island; Tim's son, James (Meghan) Lewis, and daughter, Tesla, also on Nantucket; her sister, Jennifer Lewis of Chapel Hill; step-grandchildren Nick, Nora, Sam, and Henry Boyd; and countless friends. A memorial for Melanie will be held on October 5, at noon, at the UC Berkeley Faculty Club.

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REMEMBER

“I worked with Melanie at the library. I was diagnosed with…”

Learn more about the Lewis family on Ancestry.com

According to the 1920 census there were 69,503 families with the Lewis surname in the United States.