

BONNIE L. MARSH BLACKMORE
December 1, 1941 – September 12, 2013

Insert in the Memorial Celebration for Bonnie on October 6, 2013 at First Congregation Church.

Bonnie was born in Bozeman, Montana on December 1, 1941, daughter of William Glenn and Ella Elizabeth (Beth) Marsh. In 1943 Glenn took a position as manager of the Milk and Cream Department at the University of Minnesota, so Bonnie grew up mainly in St. Paul, on Front Street (from 1946) and in a house on Breda Avenue which her parents purchased in 1953. Brother Dan was born in 1945 and Brother John in 1947.

Bonnie attended Tilden Grade School and had many fond memories of the fun she shared with friends in her graduating 8th grade class (1955), many of whom remain friends to this day. She graduated from Murray High School in 1959 and went on to study journalism at the University of Minnesota. During her University years she discovered her love of adventure. In 1961 she and her brother John traveled by bike around Lake Superior. She was 19; he was 15. When she was 20 she and a friend took a road trip to New York City...without a map. During those years she sang in the choir at First Congregational Church, where she became acquainted with Ron Blackmore, a young man from the Iron Range whom she had first met in 1958 through a statewide UCC youth organization. They began dating in 1963, not long after Bonnie became Editor in-Chief of the *Minnesota Daily*. They were married in June 1964, just after her graduation with a B.A. in Journalism.

Bonnie and Ron traveled extensively in the U.S. and Canada in the first years of their marriage (and always). In December, 1967 they left to see other parts of the world, spending time in Tahiti, New Zealand, Australia (6 months), Hong Kong, Japan (2 weeks), and the Hawaiian Islands.

They returned to Minneapolis, where Bonnie worked on completing her M.A. in Journalism, graduating in 1971. Meanwhile, daughter Jenny-Alice was born in December, 1968 and infant son Ronald Cameron was adopted into the family in March, 1970. Ron's pathology residency took them to Colorado Springs, Colorado from 1971-1973. He was drafted and served in Orlando, Florida, where they lived from 1973-1975. Son Murray Glenn was born there in February, 1974.

In 1975 they returned to Minnesota, purchasing a house on Churchill Street in St. Paul, in which Bonnie resided until the end of her life. In February, 1976 three-year-old daughter Leah Mee Ra was adopted into the family from Korea. Bonnie attended the William Mitchell College of Law until a bout with appendicitis (and the realities of raising four young children) interceded and changed her plans. The children attended Breck School, and Bonnie worked there in the career resource center. In 1979 her parents returned to Montana, and Bonnie and the kids drove to visit them in Hamilton every summer after that. In 1979 Bonnie and Ron moved their children out of Breck and into the public school system at Webster Elementary. During these years Bonnie sang in the choir at First Church, served on several church committees, played piano and classical guitar, competed in a tennis league (she especially enjoyed doubles), was involved with the Minnesota Zen Center, and served for a time as president of the Minnesota Jung Association. In 1981 she took a one-month backpacking and rock-climbing course in Wyoming with the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS).

In 1982 she and Ron separated. Bonnie had a creative approach to life, and their approach to separation was no different. They didn't want their children's lives to be unduly disrupted, so the children remained at the Churchill house while Bonnie and Ron took turns staying there each week. She and Ron remained friends. Not long after the separation Bonnie began dating David Cicchese, a musician friend she had met through First Congregational Church. They took some memorable trips together and she introduced him to the children, who came to love him as part of their extended family. Bonnie and David maintained a close bond over the years until she died.

In 1985 Bonnie compiled two detailed (and entertaining) family history books to celebrate her parents' 50th wedding anniversary. In the mid '80s Bonnie worked as an editor, and was studying to become a Jungian analyst when the law changed, requiring that analysts hold a Ph.D. In the summer of 1987 she took a backpacking trip to the Bob Marshall Wilderness, a dream she had held for years. She saved up money from temp work, and that fall she bought a new car.

In was in this car, on Nov. 29, 1987 that the accident occurred which would change her life forever. Driving home with the children from a Thanksgiving visit to Hamilton, the car slipped on the icy interstate, crossed the median, and was hit by an oncoming semi. As a result of the accident Murray spent time in the hospital with internal injuries, Leah suffered sever brain damage (emerging from a coma after 6 months), and Bonnie's spinal cord was severed, paralyzing her from the chest down. Cameron died the next day.

Bonnie remained in intensive care at the Hennepin County Medical Center for close to a month, then moved to HCMC's Knapp Rehabilitation Center, where she took part in physical and occupational therapy while becoming acquainted with her physical limits and the new boundaries in her world. In June, 1988 she moved into a small room at the house on Churchill. That summer she took a trip to Montana in a little Dodge Omni. In September she moved into Courage Center, a resource for people with disabilities, to learn independent living skills. She lived there for a year, until moving into an adapted studio at the Churchill house, designed and built by her friend Greg Shaeffer (with input from Bonnie). Although she had been impressed with Courage Center as an organization and a resource, it was her stay there that instilled in her a life-long determination never again to live in an institution.

Bonnie's drive to remain independent shaped her relationships and decisions for the rest of her life. She learned to navigate the rules of Minnesota's public assistance programs, developing many creative solutions for herself along the way. Over the years, with financial help from the State, she employed dozens of live-in helpers, most of whom she remained in contact for life, many as close friends (and one as her daughter-in-law!). While she was still at Courage Center the people at First Church pooled their resources, and in April 1989 presented Bonnie with her own handicap-accessible van. Now her friends and helpers could take her anywhere, at any time, and she would not have to rely on public transportation. More importantly, now she could TRAVEL, as she had so thrived on doing before the accident. She came to travel nearly as extensively as she had before, all over the U.S., especially to Lewistown, Montana. In 1997 she traveled (by car) through Scotland, one her lifelong dreams.

When she wasn't traveling, Bonnie spent her time (with assistance) tending her elaborate vegetable garden, cooking, planning and hosting innumerable events, attending and supporting various theaters, participating in neighborhood and local politics, recruiting, hiring, and scheduling helpers, managing her house.... She tried not to let her limitations slow her down, and strived to maintain her equanimity when they did. In June, 2013, after a sudden cold sent her to the hospital with difficulty breathing, she went on hospice at her home on Churchill. In August she moved into a group home in Arden Hills, where she came, after some weeks, to accept with grace the circumstances which had led to her departure from her beloved Churchill home. She passed away peacefully on September 12.

We remember Bonnie for her ready wit and wisdom, her generosity, her creativity, her stubbornness and courage, her astounding vision, her love of conversation, her intellectual curiosity and breadth of knowledge, and her delight in providing resources to others. She will be sorely and lovingly missed.



*If I keep a green bough in my heart
the singing bird will come.*

- Chinese Proverb

MEMORIALS MAY BE MADE OUT TO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS:

Lewistown Community Labyrinth Garden

Minnesota Landscape Arboretum

Theater in the Round Players

Minnesota Historical Society

Population Connection