

Published January 31st, 2024

Lynn Curtis



April 29, 1947 - Dec. 25, 2023

Lynn Curtis, a well-known artist who lived in Orinda, passed away on Monday, Dec. 25, 2023, in Chico, CA. She will be profoundly missed by her many close friends and by her family: husband Kerry; daughter Becky, her husband Paul Vilevac, and their children Jake and Chloe; daughter Lisa, her husband Tom Moore, and their children Spencer and Tyler; and son Chris, his wife Laura, and their children Olivia and Jane.

Not long after Lynn's father, Jack, returned from Army service in Europe in WW2, he and Lynn's mother, Ruth (Scott), made a home in Rydal, PA. Jack and Ruth Walton owned and ran the Scott family's Rydal Flower Gardens for five decades. Ruth Lynn Walton, "Lynn," was born in Abington, PA on April 29, 1947. She grew up spending many hours wandering in the greenhouses and fields. Those familiar with Lynn's artwork will see evidence of her childhood in the images she created during her long career.

After graduation from Abington High School, Lynn studied for a year at Carnegie Tech in Pittsburgh, then transferred to the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia in a joint degree program with the University of Pennsylvania. She met Kerry in 1969 at a party in Philadelphia hosted by one of her art school friends. Kerry and Lynn embarked on a whirlwind romance - they dated, became engaged, got married, and moved to San Francisco - all in five months! They found an apartment across the street from Golden Gate Park, where Lynn was able to renew her wandering among gardens and landscapes. She continued painting and became active in artists' groups.

In 1971, Becky was born in San Francisco, and a search for a "forever home" ended at the house on Overhill Road in Orinda. Lisa was born in 1974 in Berkeley. Lynn combined her painting with the roles of Mom, homemaker, and chief cook (thousands of 7 p.m. meals with fresh ingredients). She joined the Artists' Cooperative in San Francisco and displayed her work in various shows.

In 1980, Kerry was transferred by Bank of America to London, where Lynn found a big home for the family, equipped with an artist's studio and a darkroom. She was thus able to continue her artistic work with only a brief interruption. With Becky and Lisa being bused door-to-door to the American school all day, Lynn was able to resume her creative work, including exploring the museums, galleries, and shops in London. Near the end of the family's stay in London, Chris was born, so they returned home in 1982 with a two-month-old baby in a basket - a family of five.

After her return in 1982 to Orinda, Lynn's artwork naturally took a back seat to being a (wonderful) Mom. In her "spare time," she served as president of San Francisco Women Artists for a year. She sold many paintings through her numerous art exhibitions and participation in East Bay Open Studios. She was also instrumental in starting ballet classes for adults at the community center. Her work over the decades has taken many forms: paintings, drawings, photography, prints, movies, writing, poetry, and curating art shows for various organizations including the Commonwealth Club of California. As one person recently said of Lynn and her art, "If she were a self-promoter, she'd be famous." Well, she certainly was not any kind of self-promoter, being modest and kind. But she is famous to the many who loved and admired her.

Lynn was laid to rest on Dec. 30 at Oakmont Memorial Park in Lafayette. A Celebration of Life will be held on Sunday, Feb. 18 at 12 p.m. at the Orinda Community Center. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in her name to the Parkinson's Foundation or the Michael J. Fox Foundation.

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