



Phyllis Jean Schmidt Fitzgerald

MAY 2, 1938 - SEP 28, 2024



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Table of Contents

Obituary	Page 3
Tribute Wall	Page 5
Media	Page 7



Phyllis Jean Schmidt Fitzgerald

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Phyllis Jean Schmidt Fitzgerald passed away peacefully in her sleep on September 28, 2024, in Hilo, Hawaii, at the age of 86. Born on May 2, 1938, in Chicago, Illinois, Phyllis was the daughter of John Henry “Hank” Schmidt, whose parents were Volga German immigrants, and Helen Virginia Scully. Growing up, Phyllis was especially close to her grandmother, Helen Chauncey, a descendant of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Phyllis graduated from Parker High School in Chicago in 1956 and initially aspired to be a journalist while attending college in Chicago. After eloping to Las Vegas with Marine officer Eugene Williams, the couple moved to California, where they raised three children: Joseph, Laura (aka Bergen), and Lynda. They eventually divorced, and as a single mother, Phyllis pursued her education, earning a degree in psychology and a Master of Science in Counseling from California State University, Hayward, in 1973.

Phyllis later married William Fitzgerald and moved to Auburn, California, where she worked as a licensed marriage and family counselor while raising her youngest daughter, Lynda. After her second divorce, Phyllis moved to Sacramento, where she married Bud Walmer and worked as a school psychologist at the Dixon Unified School District. After divorcing Bud, she moved to Santa Rosa to be closer to her daughters, Bergen and Lynda, and worked as a private counselor and school psychologist until her retirement.

Phyllis was deeply involved in her community, volunteering at Jack London State Historic Park and the Earle Baum Center of the Blind, among other places. She found great fulfillment in her volunteer work. She discovered the Unitarian Universalists (UU) during the 1970s and remained a devoted member until she died, belonging to several UU women’s and volunteer groups. Phyllis was a dedicated mother and grandmother, and she loved her children and grandchildren deeply. She loved to dance and sing and had a sarcastic wit and effervescent spirit that was infectious to everyone around her.



Obituary

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In 2023, Phyllis moved to Hilo, Hawaii to live with her daughter Lynda and to be closer to her grandson William. She passed unexpectedly but peacefully in her sleep after a fun night out with friends. Phyllis is survived by her daughter, Lynda; her son, Joseph and wife Jeanene; and her grandchildren, William Duncan, Olivia Ropp, and Mason Williams. Phyllis was preceded in death in 2021 by her beloved daughter, Bergen Williams, well known for her role as Big Alice on the long-running soap opera General Hospital. In lieu of flowers, please make a donation to the charity of your choice.



Tribute Wall

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Dee Ray posted:

I met Phyllis when I joined a women's group at the UU Congregation in Santa Rosa, CA in 2013. She was warm and insightful, and I always think of her with a smile on her face. Of course, she talked about her daughters a lot, and it was evident they were a big part of her life. I'm so glad she got to spend her last couple of years in Hawaii close to Lynda and William.


October 29 at 2:49 PM



Karen Crockett posted:

Hi Lynda, I will always remember your mom as she shared her expertise about ragweed. Her attempts to discipline us with her infamous lectures, as we sat and listened. Refraining from laughing. She will be missed!

October 15 at 12:12 PM

 **Lynda Williams** October 26 at 3:07 AM
That's hilarious thanks, Karen



Lesley Flynt planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Phyllis.



October 15 at 2:30 AM



Anonymous sent an Emerald Garden Basket to the Schmidt Fitzgerald family.



October 15 at 2:30 AM



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PG

Patricia Larsen Gaumer posted:

Phyllis and I worked together for Dixon schools for many years. She became a dear friend to my family and we spent many fun times together but one of my favorite memories was the 3 summers we enjoyed the Santa Barbara Writers Conference. Held at the time on the Westmont College campus in Montecito, we shared a dorm room and experienced the college life neither of had before - both of us having attended college while working and raising families. We loved attending writing classes- no grades, no pressure, wandering the beautiful grounds, and enjoying a wonderful social life for the duration . No responsibilities, and great food ! Neither Of us wrote the 'great American novel' but we sure had fun trying ! I will always miss my gal Pal !

October 10 at 4:54 AM

LW

Lynda Williams October 26 at 3:08 AM

Thank you, Patricia. Your friendship was so important to my mom. Thank you so much for all the years of your friendship and love for her. Both you and Dean and your family.

LW

Lynda Williams shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

I love this picture of my mother Phyllis. It's from her senior high school yearbook.



October 10 at 2:34 AM

KH

Kalar Holland posted:

I met Lynda's mom briefly when she and Lynda came to carry me out of a lockdown from a hurricane. They piled all my food and suitcases in the back seat with "mom" holding it all together. Travelling down the highway from Leilani to Hilo, we talked the power of spirit and our connections with the Unitarian Church being so inclusive, and living a life that is guided by spirit. I could tell in her days she was a wild woman, and a smart and loving one for sure.

October 8 at 8:54 PM

LW

Lynda Williams October 26 at 3:11 AM

Thank you Kalar! I'm so glad you got to meet her for a moment. She was a very brilliant and courageous trailblazer. I am my mother's daughter. 🙏❤️🔪



Media

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Lynda Williams shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

October 10 at 2:34 AM





Memories only last if you share them

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



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