



Melissa Ann McClure

NOV 29, 1953 - MAY 14, 2023



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Melissa Ann McClure, 69, of Davidson, North Carolina, died on May 14, 2023, at home in the loving care of her husband and daughter following a long and courageous struggle with cancer. Melissa was born on November 29, 1953, in Birmingham, Alabama, the second daughter of Walter F. McClure Jr. and Billie Ruth (Fikes) McClure. She was an artist, former teacher, and the Emeritus Dean of the Pacific Northwest College of Art in Portland, Oregon.

As a teenager, Melissa's family moved from Birmingham to Atlanta, Georgia. Melissa studied art at the Atlanta College of Arts. In 1974, she married David Griffiths, and together they had a daughter, Naomi McClure-Griffiths (now of Canberra, Australia). The young family moved to Portland, Oregon, in 1980, where Melissa established herself in the arts community and taught at Bassist College. Melissa and David divorced in 1988. In 1988, Melissa obtained her Master of Fine Arts degree from Portland State University. Melissa exhibited her art at venues in Atlanta, Portland, and San Francisco throughout the 1980s and early 1990s. She continued her teaching career at the Pacific Northwest College of Art (PNCA), eventually becoming its Academic Dean, before retiring from PNCA in 2011.

Melissa remarried to Christopher Ley in 2005. The couple lived in Portland before moving to Davidson, North Carolina, in 2012, together with Melissa's mother, Billie Ruth. Despite her illness, she applied her art and style to the house and property they loved – her “paradise” on Sugar Hill; gardening, decorating with the changing seasons, and immersing herself in country life. Melissa became an active member of the St. Alban's Episcopal Church and especially its Flower Guild. She was also on the Board of the Davidson Music@StAlban's concert program.

Throughout her life, Melissa was a rescuer of animals and people alike. She brought people under her wing and built communities around her. She had a love of design and beauty in the natural world and music.



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Melissa is survived by her husband, Christopher Ley; former husband, David Griffiths; daughter, Naomi McClure-Griffiths (David McConnell); stepdaughter, Amelia Ley; and granddaughter, Madeleine McConnell-Griffiths. She was preceded in death by her parents and sister, Melanie McClure.

The funeral service will be held on Monday, May 22, 2023, at 2:00 pm at St. Alban's Episcopal Church in Davidson.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made in her name to the North Shore Animal League America or to the Pacific Northwest College of Art Scholarship Fund.

James Funeral Home, of Huntersville, is serving the family and obituary lovingly written by the family.



Tribute Wall

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Ginger Ray posted:

I am just hearing of Melissa's death. We were Junior high and High school buddies in Huntsville before her family moved to Georgia. I loved her like a sister. She was thrilling, artistic, funny, and ahead of her time! I am so happy to know she made her life immersed in art. We had reconnected by email in 2019 and hoped to meet in Asheville. And how I regret that we did not. Covid can only be blamed in part. I take responsibility for not taking the initiative to plan a visit. I know she was so proud of her daughters by how she wrote about them. I am so sorry for your loss and want you all to know she was a great teenager.

September 19 at 2:01 PM



Paul Platosh posted:

Farewell, Melissa! It was so nice to get to know you 23 years ago. You were always inspiring! In the words of a mutual colleague. "you knew how to get a horse to walk backwards" Miss you.

June 20 at 3:03 PM



Anonymous sent a Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum to the McClure family.



May 20 at 10:32 AM



Memories only last if you share them

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



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