

# Sheila Steck McKee

March 20, 1933 - September 24, 2022



Sheila Steck McKee died peacefully at home in Seattle on September 24, 2022 at the age of 89.

Sheila was born in Santa Monica on March 20, 1933 to parents Jessica Smith and Harold Wallis Steck. Her family moved frequently and she attended many different schools. As a child she loved being outside, playing in the woods, playing sports, and reading.

Sheila's father was a man of many talents and interests including writing and helping to found Radio Free Europe, while her mother was a colorful, outspoken free spirit. She had two sisters; Sharon with whom she shared a love of classical music, and her younger sister Sarah.

While living in Munich for a year she spent a summer at the Sorbonne and returned to the US a worldly young adult. Completing her college studies at University of Connecticut she renewed her friendship with a geology student, Bates McKee. They were married in 1955 and took their honeymoon cruising in a very small sailboat with his younger brother Charlie tagging along. Thus began her love of sailing which eventually led to her teaching sailing as a career in later life.

While in Palo Alto for graduate school they lived in an Eichler home which sparked an interest in houses and real estate, her second career in later life. Bates became a professor at UW and they moved to Seattle in 1958. She found a wonderful Eichler-inspired home in Sheridan Beach where she lived for more than 50 years, successfully raising her four children after divorcing in the late 60's.

Sheila's accomplishments were many, and as varied as her interests. She started and ran several sailing schools; she passed her love of sailing to her four children, and two became career professionals and Olympic Medalists. She served as the Director of the Shoreline Chamber of Commerce. She became a notably conscientious and effective real estate agent with devoted clients who became lifelong friends. She had to work hard to provide for her family and to take care of herself financially, and was frugal yet generous.

Sheila was a spiritual person and a lover of art, classical music, animals, and people. Throughout her life she drew an amazing collection of friends (some since childhood) who were intelligent, compassionate, and eclectic as she was. She was proficient in diverse genres such as technical stock charting and astrology. She was a creative cook, and an early adopter and lifelong adherent to nutrition and a healthy lifestyle. She was a lover and protector of trees and a lifelong gardener. She taught herself to kayak, to macramé, to paint. She had a wonderful sense of humor, and never lost that ever-present spark and twinkle in her eye.

Sheila was preceded by her daughter Katharine and is survived by her sons Bates, Jonathan, and Charlie. She is also survived by nine grandchildren and one great-grandchild. Reflecting on her children, Sheila hoped that they could "express their essence and pursue their passions". She successfully championed these aspirations in family and friends alike.

Please join her children, grandchildren, and friends in remembering the remarkable person who was, and the enduring spirit who is, Sheila McKee.

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