



Maria K. Wolf

August 12, 1968 - January 13, 2023

MARIA K. WOLF (1968 – 2023)

On January 13, 2023, Maria K. Wolf died peacefully following a series of complex medical issues while at the University of Pennsylvania Hospital. Her loving family and a Buddhist spiritual mentor were by her side. Fifty-four years earlier she was born to Eugene K. and Jean K. Wolf in Syracuse, NY, on August 12, 1968. In 1973 her family moved to Ardmore, PA, where Maria spent her childhood. From day one, an aspect that made Maria unique was a rare congenital lymphatic condition and immunodeficiency that primarily impacted her lungs. Beginning when she was age two, her family traveled to California over five summers for pairs of surgeries to reduce swelling in Maria's left arm and hand by a specialized surgeon at UCLA. Even if her limb lacked some mobility, Maria persevered as a happy child. Despite medical issues, Maria led a meaningful and fulfilling life, making the most of her experiences, not only for her own personal growth but to help others as well.

In Lower Merion Township, PA, Maria attended Wynnewood Road Elementary (grades K-4), Penn Valley Elementary (5th grade), and Welsh Valley Middle School, before graduating in 1986 from Lower Merion High School. She loved to read and became a diligent musician and lover of all types of music. She first learned to play the piano from her mother, who taught preschoolers and neighborhood children in the family home. She then took up trumpet because

it was the one instrument she could handle, and it also strengthened her lungs. Her father was a trombonist and Professor of Musicology at Penn and became her coach. Maria performed with Lower Merion's school orchestra and jazz band, at the Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church, and with the Delaware County Youth Orchestra. Additionally, she learned to sew from her mother and became a skilled costume mistress for productions by the Lower Merion Players and the Penn Players at college. Summers she worked on productions at the Astor's Beechwood Mansion, Newport, RI, and Glimmerglass Opera in Cooperstown, NY. Her ongoing interest in fashion and design further evolved with her experiences living in France for a summer and travels through Europe and western US states with her family.

After high school Maria pursued her B.A. in Art History at the University of Pennsylvania, graduating in 1991. Her interest in artists, fashion, and design combined well with minors in French and Psychology. While at Penn, she also found spirituality and strength through Buddhism at the Tibetan Buddhist Center of Philadelphia, where she practiced for over 25 years.

Maria took up residence in Philadelphia after college, taking advantage of the city's rich cultural scene with her love of art, music, food, and fashion, especially when she lived near South Street. Her inquisitiveness and interest in culture also included travel to other places. Her maternal and paternal grandparents lived in Manhattan, NY, and Montgomery, AL, respectively. Maria's visits to their homes were further broadening experiences. Her paternal grandmother was a speech therapist for autistic children and introduced Maria to the Option Institute and its campus in Sheffield, MA. Maria held admiration for how the founders of Option helped their son overcome autism. She profited from 17 different enriching Option programs that increased her own self-growth and cultivated new friendships. Option taught Maria to choose love and happiness to overcome hardships, and she used these philosophies with friends, enabling them to see their lives from a new

perspective.

Maria's humanitarian nature, love of people, and travels in this country and abroad influenced her career choices. In 1995, Maria became an editorial assistant at the Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics, where she worked for 10 years. Though not her field, her attention to detail and precision was invaluable when editing journal articles. In 2005, she moved on to become an Administrative Coordinator to the Dean of the School of Nursing at Penn. Here she applied her proofreading skills and design concepts to the Dean's PowerPoint presentations, publications, and more. She further advanced in her career in 2007, when she became Coordinator for the Center of Excellence in Environmental Toxicology at Penn's School of Medicine. She handled all communications and management of public outreach to five community stakeholders under the program director to improve environmental health. Her position entailed writing and editing grant submissions and manuscripts, administering a high school summer mentorship program, serving as teaching assistant for Master of Public Health classes, and preparing websites and presentations. Maria found her job to be especially rewarding in her interactions with the public, students, and faculty, while ultimately contributing to positive outcomes of suffering communities.

In addition to leading a full and passionate personal and professional life, she also battled and survived lymphoma twice, with her treatment in 2016 resulting in a life-threatening pulmonary embolism. In part, due to her diligent efforts, she miraculously recovered and moved back home with her mother in Ardmore. She enjoyed volunteering at Penn Environment in Philadelphia and especially at the Wayne Art Center working with artists. Complications from a recurrence of lymphoma in late December 2022 were ultimately too much for her to overcome. She fought for life to the very end with her huge compassionate heart leading the way: seldom complaining, despite her health

issues. She will always remain a true “people person” who will never be forgotten and whom we will always hold in our hearts. We will especially miss her contagious smile.

Maria is survived by her mother Jean of Ardmore, her brother John of Wayne and his son Lucas, whom she dearly loved and greatly missed during her recent hospitalization. Aunts, uncles, and cousins from across the country also mourn her loss.

A memorial service and reception will be held at Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church on Saturday, February 11, 2023, at 2:30 PM. Internment there will be held privately.

Memorial contributions in Maria’s name can be made to: The Tibetan Buddhist Center of Philadelphia, <https://www.tibetanbuddhist.org/>; Option Institute, International Learning and Training Center, Sheffield, MA, <https://option.org/>; or the Wayne Art Center, <https://www.wayneart.org/> – all places that Maria loved.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

FEB 11. 2:30 PM (ET)

Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church
625 Montgomery Avenue
Bryn Mawr, PA

Tribute Wall



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Maria K. Wolf.*



February 10, 2023 at 05:39 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Maria K. Wolf.*



February 10, 2023 at 01:48 PM



“ *Lavender Reflections Spray was purchased for the family of Maria K. Wolf.*



January 30, 2023 at 12:30 PM



“ *I will always remember Maria coming out of Paul's class in the conference room on Sunday mornings and coming over to chat with me at the Book Center. The smile, oh, that smile. The world seems a little dimmer now. My deepest sympathies to you, Jean, and everyone who loved Maria.*

Kathleen MacMurray - January 27, 2023 at 12:28 PM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Maria K. Wolf.*



January 23, 2023 at 10:14 AM



“ *Dear Jean -- my deepest sympathies on Maria's passing. She was an amazing woman - funny, smart and determined. I am honored to have known her. Best wishes, LiLy*

LiLy Milroy - January 22, 2023 at 10:33 PM