



## Karen Sue Zimmerman

March 20, 1956 - January 2, 2026

Karen Sue Zimmerman, born March 20, 1956, quietly passed after a long battle with Alzheimer's Disease on January 2, 2026. She had been in the tender care of Black Mountain Neuro-Medical Treatment Center for ten years. Her husband, Keith Holdsworth, and two nurses were with her as she passed.

Karen was a vibrant, energetic, and healthy child growing up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, with her parents, Robert and Miriam Zimmerman, and her sisters, Robin and Betsy. She attended college at California State University, where she discovered lifelong friends, while she achieved a degree in Speech Therapy and Audiology, and worked for a time in eastern Maryland, working with deaf children.

In the 1980's, Karen shifted gears and began a career in the hotel industry. Her spirit, love for people, and sense of honor facilitated her opportunities to rise to Convention Services Director at the Washington, DC Hyatt. It was these times that generated many friends and great times. It was in this period that Karen met Keith, 1996 to be precise. Keith had come to Washington, DC, to help his cousin pack his house for a move to San Diego. Mike was a fellow executive committee member, and it just so happened that Karen was hosting a goodbye party for him. Karen met Keith, and love was born. They married on November 27, 1998.

Karen's busy life centered around work, but included a healthy portion of travel, entertaining, and Steeler games. Her loved ones can still hear her sing, "Here we go, Steelers, here we go!"

After the horrific events of September 11, 2001, the hotel industry collapsed, and Karen's position was eliminated. She secured a position with the United Food and Commercial Workers' Union as a meeting planner. Just working on the other side of the desk. More friends came from her work there.

In 2005, Karen and Keith started their retirement home near Asheville, NC, and life was full of promise. Suddenly, the world changed in April 2008, when Karen received the diagnosis of Alzheimer's Disease at 52 years of age. At least, it answered a lot of questions.

The next day, Karen met with the Alzheimer's Association to get some answers. She wound up with a position on their Early Onset Advisory Board. She attended many fundraising events and Memory Walks, giving presentations on her experience with the disease.

Karen and Keith decided to move to Asheville sooner rather than later and did so in 2011. Karen continued her advocacy work with the Memory Care Clinic and Alzheimer's Association local chapter until the disease prevented her from continuing.

The Memory Care Clinic founded a support group for Alzheimer's victims and families, and Karen and Keith became quite involved, which led to more friends and an opportunity for Karen to explore pottery. James Hyde, a fellow victim, offered to teach Karen about pottery. A wonderful, creative experience. They created simple beauty, and Karen's pieces are on many friends' counters.

As Karen's condition deteriorated, she found tender care for a time with Care Partners, until she required constant care. She then went to Black Mountain Neuro-Medical Treatment Center for the rest of her life. She received the most kind, loving care that her husband, family, and friends could hope for. Memorial gatherings will be announced by invitation only.

No charity has been set up to receive donations, but if you are so moved, the Alzheimer's Association is the go-to for research funding.