

Holly O'Konski Austin

May 7, 2024



Holly O'Konski Austin crossed the threshold between this world and another in the evening on 2/18/2024. She passed in the comfort of her own bed, surrounded by those she loved most, the hewn timbers and filtered light of the yurt she called home, and a forest formed by the memories and dreams of a lady well-loved and a life well-lived.

Born Holly Ann O'Konski 2/4/1950 in Oakland, CA, she was the first child of A. Holly Hollingsworth and Chester T. O'Konski. After a happy childhood first dreaming about then riding horses, Holly veered south for undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of California, San Diego; after grad school, she roamed the european countryside with a pack on her back, and byways of the Golden State in a Corvere named Maybelline. On a trip to the Stanislaus River Holly met a man named Neal Austin - love blossomed between them, amd 1980 saw them planted in a landscape of surrealist beauty where the Smith River skirts the Siskiyous. Three years later they married, and they were joined by their son Jay in 1984.

Holly's passion for uplifting self-expression and supporting creativity found a worthy outlet beginning in the late '80s: as Executive Director of DNACA, Holly sought to celebrate all the arts, not just those she practiced

herself. After >20 years of her leadership, DNACA more than doubled its program count and was flourishing with Artists working with her to elevate self-expression from grade schools to master classes, from the prison to the veteran's hall.

In retirement, Holly traveled: with her husband to France, Norway, Italy and more; and with her son to Paris, Mexico City then all across Portugal and Spain. These travels fed her soul and brought her great joy; even after Holly's body lost the ability to travel her mind soared in flights and river trips made of memory.

In the end, the Sarcoma cancer she had battled for years finally overcame her. Holly is survived by her loving husband Neal Jay + son Jay Sterling Austin and by her brothers + their families: Tim O'Konski and Susan Meade with their children Alex, Patrick & Cedar O'Konski; Mark & Jody with son Sam O'Konski, and Brian O'Konski.

A Celebration of Life will be held Saturday, May 11th, 2024 from 1-3pm in the UMC Community Room (755 7th St, Crescent City, CA). Memorial information + link for donations in Holly's memory at <https://linktr.ee/HollyOAustin>