



Marietta Patricia Nichols

OCT 18, 1946 - JUN 9, 2016



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Marietta Nichols of San Carlos, CA passed away suddenly yet peacefully the evening of June 9, 2016 at 69 years of age. She took her final breath with her loving family nearby and holding hands with her son Chad while listening to one of her favorite songs, Time to Say Goodbye by Andrea Bocelli. Born to Arthur and Anita Shanoian on October 18, 1946 in Hayward, CA, she is survived by her adoring husband of 41 years, best friend, and soulmate Ken, her son James Screeton, Jr., his wife Melinda his children Kayle, Adrianna, Jenna, Anthony, and Alyssa, her son Chad and wife Rose Marie and their children Victoria and Sean, sister Joyce Kennedy and brother Douglas Shanoian and wife Patty, dear nieces and nephews Renee O'Brien, Lynne Kennedy, Valerie Kennedy, Damian Shanoian, Jeromy Shanoian, best friend and partner in crime Trude Richmond, and many great nieces and nephews, cousins, and friends whom she loved immensely. Preceded in passing by her brother Art Shanoian, Jr. "Cookie" as she was affectionately called when she was a young girl had a servant's heart guided toward her family from a young age. She cherished her cousins incredibly and looked forward seeing them during the many visits back to the family farm near Fresno with her parents and siblings. She always got to ride in the middle of the front seat because she got car sick and joked later in life that her brother Doug never made her forget she was being spoiled to have the privilege. She was a Girl Scout and Candy Striper at the hospital, embracing her servant's heart from a young age. Marietta loved caring for children and babysat the neighborhood kids to earn money as a teenager. Dancing was one of her great joys and as a girl was a Sugar Plum Fairy in the famed Nutcracker Ballet at the San Francisco Opera. Marietta had an adventurous spirit and loved horsepower. She boasted about her Rancho with a T-Bird motor that she drag raced a bit in high school that "no one could touch her". As a young woman, she loved music and Lake Tahoe from which one of her trips she hitchhiked saying in hindsight it probably wasn't the best



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idea. She truly was a reflection of the best of both of her parents whom she deeply, deeply loved, respected, and admired. Her father Arthur went on to be a Hall of Fame Auto Racing Car Owner. Marietta cherished their many trips to the races where she could cheer on the family car, most special to her heart being the scenic and famous Calistoga Speedway, one of the few tracks that mom Anita would go to. When her father Art won the 1973 BCRA Car Owner's Championship, it was at the celebratory banquet that she met the 1973 BCRA Driving Champion, Ken Nichols whom she said, "Once I saw him that was it. He was my man". Ken and Marietta were soulmates joined in true love. They shared the same passions for competition, adventure, kindness, and family. After getting married at Lake Tahoe in 1975, she and Ken traveled to the races with her son Jimmy on the West Coast for the next two years until they decided to go to the racing capital of the world and move to Indiana. The family shared many adventures traveling through the Midwest and across country which became many of her most cherished stories. Getting lost for 6 hours at night when they were only about an hour from home in the middle of nowhere after husband Ken said he knew a shortcut, trying to fry up the little fish he caught to bring home for dinner that she said ended up being about the size of two potato chips, and even flying in a Learjet. When they lived in Brownsburg, she loved to recall the story of when Ken took Jimmy to play in the local Little League All Star game and he lost a pop up in the lights which unfortunately found his face on the way down. Dad opened the door and said, "Now, don't panic" holding Jimmy back from sight until she raced over and saw her son and recalled that, "it was so swollen and bruised it looked like the baseball was in his eye". It was in Indianapolis in 1976 that son Chad was born. He went to his first races at only a few weeks old for which she said she left one teeny part of his hands exposed to the sun which got burned and the doctor sternly admonished her like she couldn't believe. He never stepped foot outside again if he was in arm's reach of her without his mom's hands slathering sunscreen all over his face, even as an adult. Marietta loved the long nights to the races to compete and see what she considered her extended family. Her husband Ken and her would put the back seats in the Toyota Celica down to make a hot wheels race track and bed for son Chad. To save time they would change driver and



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passenger positions at speed down the highway. Marietta was never the owner or driver of record, but she was an integral part and inspiration for three Hall of Fame Careers, multiple championships, and hundreds upon hundreds of feature victories of her father, husband, and sons. The grandstands will forever echo with her yelling "C'mon Nichols GO!!!" as her husband charged to the lead. Marietta adored her family. She never missed a wedding, funeral, birthday, or any family event that she could attend. In a day and age when families seem to go their separate ways and keep in touch passingly via social media, she embraced the lost art of "the visit" that her parents had done so well. She made time whenever possible to stop by and spend time with her family and friends. Racing trips to Madera would often involve her dropping her father, husband, and sons off at the track while she went to see the family in Fresno until returning later in the evening to the races. She would spend hours on the phone keeping in contact with all those she held close to her heart listening, telling stories, and offering unfiltered advice straight from the heart which we will all miss. She enjoyed beautiful things but was never considered materialistic. She liked her jewelry shiny and the wheels on her car chrome. She loved to travel most special place being Amsterdam, but also spent time in Italy, Belgium, England, Japan, and Paris among others. She enjoyed Andrea Bocelli, whom she saw live the week prior to her passing. A truly special moment for a woman loved her music and never let West Side Story or The Wizard of Oz play without joining in song. One of her most precious days was the surprise 40th Anniversary party her husband Ken threw for her with all her friends and family waiting in secret at The Olympic Club in the very same room she helped orchestrate her parent's wedding anniversary celebration. When the doors whisked open her eyes and face lit up and she said she "could just not believe it". The woman of honor who loved dancing her whole life and would always remind us that her husband Ken doesn't dance was in for the real surprise. She was absolutely astonished when she found out that he had secretly taken lessons when he led her around the floor in dance in front of all those who loved her. Her smile that day was as big and bright as her heart. Most of all, Marietta was an incredible giver. Everyone felt like family, even strangers. She took care of us all. Officially, she was a volunteer at St. John's Armenian Church, but unofficially she



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was a volunteer in all our lives. She took the time to ask about one's life and loved enough to listen. She was the rock of the family and the keeper of its stories and secrets. She knew anything about anyone at any time because she took the time to care and we all felt safe leaning on her. One never entered her house without a warm smile and embracing arms and you never left her house without a plate of food and an I love you. Marietta was richly loving and generous and in her passing one finds it impossible to recall a time she asked for anything in return. Memorial and viewing will be held at Skylawn Funeral Home and Memorial Park 100 Lifemark Rd., San Mateo, CA on Tuesday June 14. Guests may arrive at 11 AM with memorial to begin at 12 PM. Reception to follow.



Tribute Wall

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Judy Gerhardt posted:

My thoughts and prayers are with you Ken & Family. I had a nice conversation with Marietta, a couple months ago at Madera Races. So sad of her passing. She was always with a smile on her face. Judy Gerhardt.

June 13 at 4:33 AM



Memories only last if you share them

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



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