



Eleanor Wilson Williams

March 10, 1937 - October 2, 2024

Eleanor Wilson Williams passed away in Sarasota, Florida, on October 2, 2024. She was born in Charlotte, North Carolina, on March 10, 1937.

Eleanor was a powerful influence on everyone around her. She attended Dana Hall School in Wellesley, MA, and was admitted to Radcliffe College class of 1958. She married her teenage sweetheart, Bruce G. Williams, and left Radcliffe College after her first year to raise four children in Greenwich, Connecticut.

In the 1960s, she worked on both Kennedy presidential campaigns and was very active with the Fresh Air Fund, opening her home and pool to children from New York inner-city neighborhoods, giving them memorable summer experiences in the country.

In the 1970s, she was a promoter for headlining rock bands and singers, including Led Zeppelin, the Rolling Stones and Stevie Wonder; and worked for Donald King on Muhammad Ali's Rumble-in-the-Jungle and Thrilla-in-Manila bouts, as well as Evel Knievel's Snake River Canyon jump.

In the 1980s, she was active in the Sanctuary Movement, helping to provide safe haven to refugees fleeing civil conflict in South and Central America. She returned to school 25 years later earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in

Comparative Studies in Religion from Harvard University in 1983.

In the late 1980s, she frequently traveled to India to study yoga under guru B.K.S. Inyengar and is pictured demonstrating various positions in numerous yoga books. She opened her own yoga studio in Cambridge, MA, and continued to teach the discipline after moving to Sarasota in 2007.

In recognition of her many years of involvement in and support of the Radcliffe and Harvard communities, she received a Distinguished Service Award from the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University in 2008.

In Sarasota, she continued her support of immigrant communities with passion, aiming not only to help vulnerable families, but to also educate the Sarasota community on their plight. She helped create the non-profit immigrant integration organization, UnidosNow, for the region's growing Latinx population and was instrumental in establishing Sarasota's Sister City relationship with Merida, Mexico.

Following in her father's footsteps, she had a deep appreciation for the arts, fervently supporting the Sarasota Opera and Ballet Companies, as well as its Symphony Orchestra and local artists. She loved boats and books, sailing and swimming — in short, being anywhere on the water. She also had an exceptional sense of style and was always impeccably turned-out.

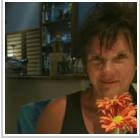
Eleanor is preceded in death by her father, industrialist, inventor and yachtsman, John J. Wilson; mother, Helen (Cooper) Marshall; stepmother, Dorothy Ann (Simpson) Wilson; sister Anne Connell Wilson; former husbands Bruce Gilbert Williams and William Joseph Belanger.

Left to cherish Eleanor's memory are her children Hannah G. Williams of Sarasota, FL; Jonathan D. Williams and wife Christine (Stetter) of New

Canaan, CT; Adam Gentry Williams and wife Elizabeth (Sweeney) of Brookline, MA; Rachel Williams Serina and husband Don of Nashville, TN; siblings Richard Berne Wilson of Marblehead, MA; Sarah Simpson Wilson of San Francisco, CA; Wendy M. Yen of Pebble Beach, CA; Ray Marshall of Oneida, NY; grandchildren Justin C. Williams and wife Regina of Austin, TX; Morgan W. Sanford and husband Jonathan of Wellesley, MA; Logan M. Williams and wife Margaret of Ridgefield, CT; Lauren G. Williams of Alexandria, VA; Addison G. Williams of Brookline, MA; Gregory V. Williams of San Antonio, TX; Leila I. Nikamal of Seattle, WA; and Matthew A. Serina of Nashville, TN; great grandchildren Bruce C. Williams, Warren J. Williams, Lucy G. Sanford, Eleanor C. Sanford and Olivia R. Williams, as well as numerous friends around the country and world.

She enjoyed a lifelong friendship with Victor and Suzanne Soler-Sala, late of Cenelle, Spain, and many visits to wherever they were posted by Unicef. Estella and Javier Curiel were outstanding friends to her while in Sarasota and after relocating to Mexico, as was former Sarasota Mayor and current Dean of Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, Kelly Kirschner. Eleanor will also be missed by many of those who cared for her so wonderfully at Morningside House of Sarasota, as well as her very special companion, Mark. Her dear friend Michelle Saia Fournet of Sarasota spent many hours by her side in her final days, bringing her comfort and facilitating FaceTime calls with immediate family members who could not make it to her side in the wake of Hurricane Helene.

Tribute Wall



“ I am very sorry to learn of Ellie's passing. Such a smart, strong, creative and colorful person. We spent many years in community as Iyengar yoga teachers. My thoughts and prayers to her family.

Liz Owen - December 21, 2024 at 10:23 AM



“ Sweet Tenderness was purchased for the family of Eleanor Wilson Williams.



October 10, 2024 at 01:32 PM



“ Dreams From the Heart Bouquet was purchased for the family of Eleanor Wilson Williams.



October 07, 2024 at 03:02 PM



“ Eleanor was a wonderful hostess and family representative to meet and entertain this possible sister-in-law. She also attended our wedding. Her brother Ray and I have been married for 59 years, so her approval was on point!

Lee Marshall - October 06, 2024 at 05:43 PM