

In Memoriam

Cari Wolfe

Cari Wolfe, Reynoldsburg, Ohio, 67, passed away quietly on May 16, 2025, under the loving touch and watchful eye of home hospice after a courageous 10-year stand against sarcoma cancer.

She was born Cari Fay Weinberg on July 12, 1957, in Marietta, Ohio, the first of five children born to Julian "Jerry" and Nancy (Hodge) Weinberg. The location would seem unusual since her father hailed from The Bronx and her mother from Bridgewater, N.Y. However, Cari



arrived while the two were finishing their undergraduate degrees at Marietta College.

Cari was a model student, bringing home mostly A's on her report cards. She also played piano, flute, piccolo and occasionally cymbals in the high school marching band. She was chosen to deliver the student address at both her middle and high school commencements, the latter occurring at Bridgewater-Raritan High School in 1975. Her academic excellence earned her a summer internship at the Merck Pharmaceutical Farm in Branchburg, N.J.

Cari's formative years were spent at the family dairy farm, Jer-Nan Farm, in Bridgewater, where her chores included helping Grandpa Hodge, her parents and her siblings bale hay, milk cows, care for calves and tend the family garden. She vividly recounted a trip with her family in the mid-1960s to a dairy auction in Lebanon, Pa., where they purchased their first two Registered Jerseys. These animals were the foundation for the family's modest Jersey herd and instrumental in launching Cari's lifelong love affair with the Jersey cow.

Because both parents were public school teachers and leaders of the Somerset County 4-H Club, the entire family was active with 4-H. The family showed cattle at fairs in Somerset and Flemington counties and the New Jersey State Fair. Cari was a member of the dairy judging team and, in 1975,

represented the county at the National 4-H Congress in Chicago and served as the New Jersey Dairy Princess.

Cari studied dairy science at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, where she was a member of the dairy judging team. She was also active

with Alpha Gamma Rho little sisters and the American Dairy Science Association, which presented her with the award for the country's outstanding dairy science student in 1979. She graduated cum laude from Virginia Tech that same year, but her inquisitive nature left her wanting more. So, she moved to Raleigh, N.C., to study dairy cattle genetics at North Carolina State University. Here she was immersed in inheritance,

genes, chromosomes and DNA, and completed her master's degree in May 1982.

While finishing her studies at NC State, Cari began scouting potential career opportunities in the dairy industry and caught the eye of the leadership at the American Jersey Cattle Association (AJCA), then known as the American Jersey Cattle Club. In January 1982, Cari broke new ground when she became the organization's first female area representative. Her territory was the Southeast, so she moved to South Carolina to better serve dairy producers and help them use AJCA programs. It was on one of those herd visits where she met her future husband, Larry Wolfe, who worked there. The two were wed in March 1983 at her home church, North Branch Reformed Church.

Cari was promoted to the management team at AJCA headquarters in Columbus in January 1987, so she and Larry moved to Ohio. For two years, she was the coordinator of domestic sales for Jersey Marketing Service and genetic improvement coordinator and was then named director of research and genetic program development. Her research responsibilities included partnering with universities and agricultural research entities to identify and help fund projects to benefit Jerseys.

It was the genetics portion of her new position, however, wherein Cari realized her true calling. Utilizing her genetics training, she collaborated with others to

plan, devise and implement numerous programs and tools designed to help Jersey breeders achieve the true potential of their genetics and maximize the value of their breeding stock. She was in her element when she could sit down with Jersey breeders in one-on-one and group settings to teach them how to use these new tools.

Her work garnered the admiration and respect of industry leaders and fellow geneticists, as evidenced by invitations to serve on advisory panels and committees of several allied industry organizations. She retired from the AJCA in June 2022 after 40 years of service and received the national Jersey organization's Award for Meritorious Service the following year.

Cari had several other interests, including her and Larry's daughter, Rebecca Fay. Her birth in September 1989 triggered a maternal response nobody saw coming. Cari gladly cleared her schedule to help usher Rebecca through life, beginning with preschool selection and vacation bible school, then soccer and swim team events, and choir rehearsals and concerts. This led to musical theater in high school and college, along with summer theater productions. This journey culminated with a long and painful trip to New York, where she helped Rebecca make the Big Apple her new home. Through it all, Cari was Rebecca's most ardent advocate and proudest supporter while giving her ample space to spread her wings.

An avid gardener, flowers were Cari's passion inside and outside the house. She enjoyed vegetables too and when she became frustrated with the Reynoldsburg clay soil, she joined two co-workers to tend to a plot in the community garden. To satisfy her musical appetite, Cari sang with the Scioto Valley Chorus, with three other ladies in an cappella quartet, and with Larry in their church choirs.

When she became an empty nester, she poured her heart into Altrusa International. She was attracted to the Columbus chapter because of their programs to promote literacy among disadvantaged young women. She served on the board for several years and was an active participant in their fundraising projects. In later years, as her stamina and mobility waned, she was most disappointed she could no longer attend meetings and work with her friends at Altrusa.

In addition to her parents, husband of

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42 years, Larry, and daughter, Rebecca (Edwin Cruz), she is survived by her sister, Amy (Chris) Grald; brothers Jeff (Beth, deceased) Weinberg, Ted (Karin) Weinberg and Chuck (Lynne) Weinberg; Larry's sisters who considered her their true sister, Carol (Jim) Baron, Peggy Coggins, Susanne (Kai Beuch) Knowles, Kathy (Jim) Bubash, Julie (Jerry) Baumgartner and Annette (Antonio) Hoggins; Larry's brothers, Randy Wolfe, Duane Wolfe, Stuart Wolfe, Jeff (Sandy) Wolfe and Ryan (Candy) Wolfe; 12 nieces; 10 nephews; cousins galore; and grandnieces and grandnephews too numerous to fathom.

Memorials may be made in Cari's memory to one or more of her favorite charities: the American Cancer Society, <https://www.cancer.org/donate/memorial-giving.html>; Altrusa International, Columbus Chapter, <https://www.altrusacolumbusoh.com/take-action>; Caleb's Prayer Foundation, <https://calebsprayerfoundation.org/about>; or St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, <https://www.stjude.org/donate/donate-to-st-jude.html>.