

## Mary Louise Engstrom

Mary L. Engstrom, 65, of Duluth, MN, died peacefully at her Island Lake home surrounded by her family after a long and courageous battle with breast cancer.

Born on May 7, 1947, in Duluth, MN, to Gust and Virginia Olson, Mary attended East High School, UMD, and the University of Minnesota.

Mary lived an extraordinary life. She was a talented musician, gardener, artist, skier, and decorator. She loved doing handwork including crocheting, cross-stitching, and as a tradition, knitting Christmas stockings for all her family members. In addition, Mary had a knack for architecture and home improvement projects and spent several years designing kitchens and baths at Home Depot.



Mary had a heart for caring for others and helping those in need. Over the years, Mary volunteered for the American Red Cross, American Heart Association, and The Lighthouse for The Blind. In addition, she helped to establish and facilitate the Blind Outdoor Leisure Development (B.O.L.D.) and was a catalyst in developing the Arroya Evacuation Program for skiers with disabilities at Spirit Mountain.

Mary joined the National Ski Patrol in 1977 and volunteered countless hours for the National Ski Patrol over 35 years. During that time, she worked as an Outdoor Emergency Care ski and toboggan instructor, trainer, and evaluator. She also served the National Ski Patrol as Assistant Western Region Director and Western Region Awards Advisor for many years. Mary truly loved ski patrolling and her ski patrolling friends!

Mary maintained her sense of humor to the very end and spent her final months mentoring and teaching others how to die with dignity and grace. She will be missed.

Mary is preceded in death by her father, Gust, and niece, Rachael Backman. She is survived by her husband and best friend, David A. Engstrom; children, Katherine (Greg) Courter, Boulder, CO, Christine (Greg) Oberstar, Minneapolis, MN, and Eleanor (Michael) Gonzalez, Odenton, MD; four wonderful grandsons, Ryan and Lucas Oberstar, Gus Courter, and Vincent Gonzalez; mother, Virginia Olson, Duluth; sisters, Kathy (Dave) Backman, Anoka, MN, and Margaret (Warren) Skinner, Duluth; brother-in-law, Bob Engstrom, Victoria, ID; special friends, Ron and Cindy Abernathy, Dean Nelson and family, Jody Smith, and Karl Dickerson; several nieces and nephews; and lots of dear friends.

Special thanks to Kathy Johnson and Kathy McQuinn of St. Mary's Hospice Care, Ron and Cindy Abernathy, and many others.

Services will be held on Sunday, January 13<sup>th</sup> at 2:00pm at Waters of Life Lutheran Church, 6221 Rice Lake Road, Duluth, MN. Visitation will be at 1:15pm on Sunday. Ski Patrollers, please wear your jackets.