



## Karen Marie Austin

September 18, 1952 - May 3, 2024

### OBITUARY MATERIAL

FOR

KAREN MARIE AUSTIN

Karen Marie Austin (Stone) passed away at home in Whitehall, Montana on May 3, 2024 at the age of 71 after a hard-fought battle against cancer.

Karen was born in Burlington, Vermont on September 18, 1952 to Mary Charbonneau Stone (Pollender) and Joseph Stone. She graduated from Vergennes Union High School in Vergennes, Vermont in 1970, after which she worked at Simmonds Precision in Vergennes. She met and later married Lionel Austin in April of 1972.

Karen and Lionel bought the Plainfield Service Center (affectionately called "The Red Store" by locals) in Plainfield, Vermont in 1978 and ran the store together until 1984. In 1991, Karen moved to Whitehall, Montana with Lionel, and the two operated The Rice Motel. Over the nearly fifteen years that they owned the Rice Motel, Karen and Lionel welcomed friends and family from near and far to share in all the beauty and hunting that Montana had to offer. In 2016, after several years of fighting late-stage kidney failure, Karen returned to Vermont for a kidney transplant. She faced both her transplant and cancer with an amazing amount of strength and courage, which was facilitated by her husband and caretaker, Lionel. The transplant not only gave her new life, it also afforded her the opportunity to get to know her grandchildren, Megan and Eric. She particularly enjoyed catching their basketball games and

the Vergennes Booster's concession stand. Karen made a quick and miraculous recovery after her transplant and returned to Montana where she was able to live next door to and enjoy time with her granddaughters Madison, Lexie and Charlotte.

Karen was a crafter, making everything from coasters and Christmas tree decorations to painted door stops and wooden stove covers. She was her own worst critic when it came to her crafts and never wanted to make the same thing twice.

Karen leaves behind her husband of 52 years, Lionel Austin, of Whitehall, MT; her daughter, Carie Tarte and her husband, Jeff Tarte, granddaughter Megan Tarte and grandson, Eric Tarte of Vergennes, VT, son Will Austin and his wife, Heidi Austin and granddaughters Madison Austin, Lexie Austin, and Charlotte Austin of Whitehall, MT. Additionally, she is survived by two brothers, Tom Stone and his wife, Linda Stone of Essex Junction, VT and Steve Stone and his wife, Debbie Stone of Burlington, VT. Karen was predeceased by her mother, Mary Pollender, father, Joseph Stone, and granddaughter, Allyssa Austin.

She wasn't a big "hugger" or talker, but she loved and appreciated those that made the extra effort to hug and talk to her. It will come as no surprise to those who knew her that she did not want a funeral service. She is at peace now and likely having a long-overdue visit with her mother. In Karen's honor, the family would like to encourage you to become an organ donor by going to <https://www.registerme.org/> to help others like Karen enjoy more time with family and friends.

# Cemetery Details

## Whitehall Cemetery

Whitehall, MT

# Tribute Wall

MA

“ Sad to hear about Karen’s passing. We were classmates. Rest in peace.

MarthaTeer - May 20, 2024 at 04:47 PM

DQ

“ I just learned of Karen’s passing and am so sad that the two of us lost touch after high school, only recently reconnecting via Facebook. As tweens in the mid 60’s we played Barbies a lot. She had the perfect Barbie case and a Ken doll (that was a big deal back then). I had Barbie and Midge. At one time I traded a Barbie outfit with her for Ken’s beach robe. Still have it. Fond memories of one of my best childhood friends. My condolences to Karen’s family.

Dorene Austin Quesnel - May 20, 2024 at 03:04 PM

RF

“ Richard and Joanie Fischer purchased the Full O f Love Bouquet for the family of Karen Marie Austin.



Richard and Joanie Fischer - May 15, 2024 at 10:31 AM

DN

“ My heart-felt condolences. She lives in you.

Dale Newton - May 06, 2024 at 07:04 PM