



Gretchen Coffey

December 24, 1935 - January 29, 2025

Isaiah 40:31

but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

Gretchen Purdum Fowler Coffey led an amazing life of fun, exploration and service made only more satisfying by overcoming hardship with sacrifice.

Frank and Helen Purdum, with their son Lee, welcomed the greatest Christmas gift with the arrival of Gretchen! born on Christmas Eve, 1935 in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Gretchen was raised in Tulsa, attending Holland Hall and Will Rogers High School.

Gretchen was well suited to her generation, following the Greatest Generation. Never one to sit around or be under-occupied, her entire life was overflowing with activity.

Her school years were full of theatre, dance and social clubs of the day.

Gretchen was one of three Oklahoma students awarded a scholarship from the University of Denver Theatre department in the summer of her junior year. This was especially welcomed as her beloved grandparents lived in Denver. She then decided to continue her education by graduating from the University of Colorado at Boulder earning a degree in Education and Theatre in 1957.

Her enthusiasm was well received as she was a cheerleader not only in high

school but continued throughout her college years as a member of the exclusive CU squad-Go Buffs! She enjoyed many friendships in college along with her sisterhood in the Delta Gamma sorority, while living in the current DG house on Pennsylvania Ave.

She enjoyed maintaining these friendships with the many fun-filled reunions throughout the years. The truly valued friendships from Tulsa and CU lasted a lifetime.

After a postgraduate European lone adventure in 1957 she took herself to San Francisco to be immersed in her new job as the executive secretary for the president of NCR....at 21 years old. Along with her vivacious personality and excellent mind, she typed like a whirlwind! She loved working and living in the vibrant city, soaking up every aspect of that wonderful place.

Gretchen married Dr. F Parker Fowler Jr and together they enjoyed the academic and social setting of Berkeley while spending their free time sailing in the bay and exploring all that northern California had to offer.

Frank Parker III added more magic to life and Gretchen absolutely loved being a mother, taking Frank everywhere with her, even sailing around the islands of Hawaii during his first year. Such fun they had.

The young family endured the tragic loss of their second son, Brian Wade, in the hospital at two days old.

Ames was born after the family moved back to Colorado and this filled her heart - her loving family of boys!

With children in tow, Gretchen next survived polio. The rehabilitation was extreme and challenging but she did not surrender. Most friends were unaware of her limitations due to this disease. Full steam ahead was the plan. Gretchen's life teaches us all to maintain faith, embrace life's challenges and push through; she never allowed herself the option of giving up.

Baby Allison was born a few years later which wrapped up childbearing with a girlie bow!

Her life was filled to the brim as motherhood was her top priority and she gave her kids the maximum 100% effort! But she also found the time to be engaged

in other meaningful ways. She was active with the Junior League, performed often with community theatre, wrote wonderful children's books and plays, substituted in the classroom, developed and marketed products, certified as a courtroom stenographer, dedicated herself to her church, traveled extensively and lived life to its fullest.

Friends at Westview Presbyterian in Longmont might remember the Church Mouse Christmas Special that she wrote and produced featuring adorable human sized mice celebrating and contemplating the birth of Christ in the stable. The homemade papier-mâché mouse heads provided for great family fun both in the making, maintaining and then authentic testing of the functionality by running around the house in the off-season!

She developed an ingenious comprehensive sewing packet for high school home-economics classes with innovative designs and techniques cleverly named "Gretchen's-You've Got It Made". Untimely, the year after receiving her patent, Home-Ec was cancelled in public schools.

Her wonderful "Daisy Dew Drop" children's book series supporting the development of character, responsibility, creativity and devotion to spiritual curiosity and faith in God will hopefully be adopted and published by grand, or great-grand, children!

Gretchen was no stranger to lose. The early 1970's found her caring for her cherished older brother Lee until his death as a young man, beginning again after the end of her 18-year marriage, and caring for her devoted dad as he passed away in his beloved Guadalajara, Mexico. From that time, Gretchen and her dear mother, Helen, became the dynamic duo until Helen passed away peacefully in 1994 in the home they shared in Boulder.

When all children had flown the coop, yet another adventure presented itself and she moved to Guadalajara, Mexico opening the country up to Mary Kay Cosmetics. She felt that this endeavor provided an excellent opportunity for women to create a business for themselves within the unique culture of Mexico.

At the age of 50, she learned to speak Spanish resulting in frequent inspirational speeches and presentations. Her endearing Spanglish engaged and entertained with humor and heartfelt authenticity and enthusiasm.

She dedicated herself to these women for over 30 years. Her devout secretary, Luzma, has shared thoughtful sentiments included here.

She enjoyed her meaningful and important friendships in Guadalajara and throughout Mexico.

She married Richard Coffey, and he adored her from the moment they met. He knew that God had offered him a true gift from heaven.

She had the sheer joy of having her grandson, AJ, live with her and go to school in Mexico which was a time that was very meaningful and life changing for her.

After the blessing of grandchildren, she planned throughout every year for her most favorite and cherished occasion: the days leading to Christmas were dedicated to her grandchildren and grandnephews. She prepared for months for this important and festive weeklong (or longer!) celebration when all the kids would come and stay with her. Together they would also create the Spectacular Annual Family Christmas Extravaganza to present at the culmination, which was not only a glorious celebration of Christmas, but also her birthday.

She moved back to Colorado and the USA permanently at the age of 84. Like most, the social limitations of covid were not well received as she would have preferred to remain active instead of isolated. We all pray that important lessons have been learned with life events like this.

The bout with polio had damaged her lungs and living with air pollution and at higher altitudes exacerbated the condition. She met this condition straight on until she was called on her final trip and adventure into the arms of her Savior. What a blessing she has been to us all.

Her wonderful legacy will endure, and her spirit will continue to live among us. Preceded in death by her infant son, Brian Wade and her brother Lee, Gretchen is survived by her husband of 40 years, Richard Coffey; her niece

Suzie Sloan and husband Rick with sons Michael, Steven and John; and her adoring children, their spouses, grandchildren and great grandchildren: Frank and Rachel Fowler, Ames and Liz Fowler, Allison and Scott Cross. Grandchildren: AJ Fowler and wife Natalie with their children Orion and Willow Rose, Parker Fowler IV with wife Arielle and daughter Veronica, Alexis Fowler, Mary Fowler, Ben Fowler, Allison Fowler Lustberg and husband James, Charles Fowler and Helen Cross.

Family correspondence can be shared through Allison Fowler Cross, PO Box 1518, Nederland, CO 80466

□Adios Jefa hermosa-Hablar de Gretchen Coffey es muy fácil, porque hoy màs que nunca debemos celebrar la fructífera vida que tuvo. Ella va a seguir viva en cientos de corazones de las Mujeres Mexicanas, porque vino con un proyecto muy grande que permitió empoderar a la Mujer en mi País que es Mèxico. Ademàs tuve el honor de ser su mano derecha durante 26 años, en los cuáles vi todas las facetas de mi Jefa como le llamaba con cariño y con respeto.

El tipo de Mujer que Gretchen fue, no es muy fácil de conocer y se da yo creo que una en un millón. Su mente siempre lúcida, progresista, que veía el Alma de las personas, que descubría el potencial que a veces esas Mujeres ni siquiera pensaron que lo tenía. Hizo una diferencia tan grande en muchas vidas, ayudò a que las Mujeres cercanas a su vida, le pudieran proporcionar mejorìa econòmica y crecimiento personal, que se atrevieran a exigir sus derechos como Mujeres. Eso no era muy dado en Mèxico y ella con sus sabios consejos, lograba que nos diéramos cuenta de todo lo que aportábamos en nuestra Sociedad, en nuestra Familia.

Durante los años que trabajè para ella, tuve infinidad de aprendizaje que me ha servido en mi vida. Ella se convirtió en una segunda Madre para mì. Trabajamos en armonía, porque era una mujer muy segura de sÌ misma, nunca sentiò que yo fuera una amenaza para ella, para su negocio o para su familia. Me adoptó como eso, como una Hija y me lo dijo repetidas veces: “mi amor somos familia, eres una hija para mì” y no nada màs lo decía, sino que

actuaba de esa forma.

Al saber que ha partido a la Casa del Padre, por supuesto que me embarga una tristeza enorme, porque aunque ya el contacto no era frecuente, cuando vino a Mèxico, específicamente a Guadalajara, cuando me viò, era como si nunca me hubiera dejado de ver. Su abrazo, sus palabras, su cariño estaba ahì, intacto y eso me hizo muy feliz. Estoy triste porque ha partido, pero cuando nos despedimos, prometimos que era un "hasta pronto", porque ambas estamos seguras de que volveremos a vernos.

El mundo ha perdido un gran Ser humano, una mujer inigualable, ahì radica el luto de nuestros corazones. Puede sonar como un sin sentido, pero dentro de nosotros, los que estuvimos siempre cerca, sabemos que por fin se ha liberado de un cuerpo que ya no le obedecía y esa Alma tan buena tan noble, ese cerebro tan brillante, no merecía estar supeditada a soportes externos. Ahora vuelve a ser libre, para volar donde ella quiera y estoy segura que está muy cerquita de Pa pà Dios, porque los Seres humanos que siguen los Mandamientos y la Doctrina de Jesucristo, tenemos la promesa de que así es.

Serìa muy largo de platicar todas las bondades que recibì siempre de ella y de Richard Coffey, no alcanzarìan hojas y hojas para resumir 26 años de vida, de trabajo, de anécdotas y de vivencias. Gracias Dios por permitirme conocer y ser parte de la vida de esta Hija amada tuya.

Jefa hermosa siempre estaràs en mi mente, en mi corazón y en mis oraciones. Como lo dijimos cuando te acompañè al Aeropuerto, no es un adiòs, es un hasta pronto y esperarè feliz de volver a coincidir contigo. Te amo mucho Jefa adorada.

Luz Maria Castro Gutierrez

Talking about Gretchen Coffey is very easy, because today more than ever we must celebrate the fruitful life she had. She will continue to live in hundreds of hearts of Mexican Women, because she came with a very big project that

allowed women to be empowered in my country, which is Mexico. Additionally, I had the honor of being her right hand for 26 years, in which I saw all the facets of my Boss, my Jefa, as I call her with great affection and respect.

The type of woman that Gretchen was is not very easy to know and I believe that she is one in a million. Her mind was always lucid, progressive; she saw the Soul of people, she discovered the potential in others that sometimes they didn't even think they had. She made such an extraordinary difference in so many lives; she helped the Women close to her live a life providing themselves with earned economic improvement and personal growth, those who dared to demand their rights as Women. This was not very common in Mexico and with her wise advice, she made us realize it: of everything we contribute to our Society, to our Family.

During the years that I worked for her, I had countless lessons that have helped me in my life. She became a second Mother to me. We worked in harmony, because she was a woman who was very sure of herself; she never felt that I was a threat to her, her business or for her family. She adopted me like that, like a daughter and she told me repeatedly: “mi amor, we are a family, you are a daughter to me” and she didn't just say it, but she acted that way.

Knowing that she has left for Our Father's House, of course fills me with enormous sadness. Because although contact was recently not frequent, when she came to Mexico, specifically to Guadalajara, when she saw me, it was as if she had never stopped seeing me. Her hug, her words, her love was there, intact, and that made me very happy. I'm sad because she is gone, but when we said goodbye, we promised one another that it was a “see you soon,” because we are both sure that we will see each other again.

The world has lost a great human being, an incomparable woman, therein lies the mourning of our hearts. Within us, those of us who were always close to her, we know that she has finally freed herself from a body that no longer

obeyed her; that Soul so good, so generous, so noble; such a brilliant brain; she did not deserve to be subject to external supports.

Now she is free again, to continue to fly wherever she wants to go and I am sure that she is very close to Our Heavenly Father because those who follow the Commandments and the Doctrine of Jesus Christ, we have the promise that this is how it is.

It would take too long to talk about all the kindness I always received from her and from Richard Coffey. There would not be enough pages to summarize 26 years of life, work, anecdotes, stories and countless experiences.

Thank you God for allowing me to know and be part of the life of this beloved Daughter of yours.

Jefa Hermosa, Beautiful Jefa, you will always be in my mind, in my heart and in my prayers. Like we said when I last accompanied you to the airport, it's not goodbye, it's an "Hasta Pronto", and I await with anticipation the joy of being with you again. I love you so much, mi Jefa Adorada.

In lieu of flowers, Gretchen supported the idea of helping others learn to help themselves: Project Hood, <https://www.projecthood.org>, WoodsonCenter, <https://woodsoncenter.org/donate-to-the-woodson-center/>, PragerU. <https://www.prageru.com/ways-to-give> Or become a member of Hillsdale's Liberty & Learning Society, <https://secured.hillsdale.edu/hillsdale/join-the-liberty-learning-society>.

Online condolences may be made to www.thewoodmortuary.com.

Tribute Wall

KF

“ I met Gretchen when her son, Frank, called me one day. I had been the president of the Colorado Springs alumnae chapter of Delta Gamma. We chatted for a bit. When he found out we had a bridge group I could hear Gretchen WHOOP in the background. She soon joined us for monthly meetings and other events. The first meeting she came to was a meeting at a local coffee shop! The coincidence was not missed by Gretchen. I had several occasions to be with her including our Book Club (which also met at a coffee shop) as well as the Delta Gamma Founders Day celebration. She was honored at that meeting for her 60 years of membership. We lost touch with each other with the onset of COVID and the declining health of my beloved husband. I came to love Gretchen for her spirited personality and her clever wit. She will be remembered by the Colorado Springs alumnae chapter at our annual Founder's Day in April. Forever in the Bonds of Delta Gamma.

Karen Frank ❤️🚢

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