



Georgia Catherine (Sullivan) Gilbert

MARCH 17, 1947 ~ FEBRUARY 12, 2018 (AGE 70)

Our hero, at once a compass, caregiver, advocate, and angel — whose rousing kindness and indelible charisma adorned all she knew — now rests in God's embrace.

Georgia Gilbert was called home to be with the Lord on February 12, 2018, at age 70. She was a beloved first daughter and sibling of eight sisters and brothers, a deeply devoted mother to four sons, loving grandmother to two, and shining example of humility, compassion, character, resilience, and faith to so many across multiple generations.

She was born in Lincoln, Nebraska, on Saint Patrick's Day, March 17, 1947. Her Irish eyes were the pride and joy of her parents, Leo and Marcie Sullivan. Soon afterwards, the growing Sullivan Clan relocated northwest of Philadelphia, where Georgia graduated from Lansdale Catholic High School in 1965. She then returned to the Midwest for her higher education, graduating Magna Cum Laude with a degree in English Literature from Mount St. Scholastica College in Atchinson, Kansas, in 1969.

After completing her formal education, she parlayed her love of language into the newsroom as a reporter for The Ogden Standard Examiner. There, she met fellow wordsmith and first husband, Phil Jensen, a free-spirited political counterweight with a personality just as loud and unafraid. Georgia left journalism for politics — where she became a Republican rising star — and was elected Vice Chairman of the Utah Republican Party in 1979. A delegate to the GOP's 1980 national convention in Detroit, positioned up front, she was among the first in the world to learn presidential candidate Ronald Reagan had selected George H.W. Bush as his running mate, a favorite story of hers. During the 1980s, Georgia served as office manager for the newly founded Westminster American Institute of Applied Politics. Concurrently, she worked as Ogden District Manager for Utah Sen. Jake Garn. Two decades later, Georgia shined as the secretary at Saint Joseph Catholic High School, and then as the University Representative for Weber State's Army ROTC Battalion until her death.

Interlaced with her professional career, she cherished her most important role, raising two sets of sons with unbounded love and absolute joy.

A proud English literature major and relentless reader, she devoured decades of conservative political heavyweights, theological giants, and myriad novelists from William F. Buckley to C.S. Lewis to John Clancy. Zesty spy thrillers made the weekend cut, popcorn bin close at hand. Up until her death, she would go to Weber County Library religiously, reading multiple books a week. Expert on Catholic doctrine, Georgia also would deconstruct every papal encyclical if you could keep up. Few could.

Georgia believed politics and religion was the red meat to be digested at dinner. Far from taboo, it animated her, startled some, infuriated liberal family and never disappointed. She was a deep thinker with a pugilistic penchant for comebacks. Smiling wryly, she could floor you with her intellect. But she also comforted through her morality. Resolute without ever pontificating, she never wavered on matters of the human conscience. Georgia gently steered you straight — faith as a guide — over and over, for decades.

She was constantly a servant, constantly putting the comfort and needs of others before her

own, constantly an example of humble strength and grace, even in the face of incomprehensible heartbreak and challenges thrown her way. She was always nurturing and patient, but solid as a rock, and unflinching in her values, her faith, and in the aid of those she loved. She passed almost exactly a year to date from her mother's death, after being her tireless caretaker for nearly a decade.

She had an easy but memorable laugh that filled rooms, and a tender, even sentimental, affect. Georgia cherished holiday gatherings, hearing about (and occasionally participating in) "debauched" weekends and especially times all four sons joined mom at the family's historic home on Eccles. She was known to make a spontaneous getaway to North Fork Campground, a road trip to the Bay Area to see loved ones and terrorize locals, a midnight showing of Rocky Horror Picture Show, or enjoying an afternoon Red Sox baseball game at Fenway with all four sons.

Her Catholic faith was her center of gravity. We now have a powerful and attentive ear in Heaven – how blessed we are for that.

Active through age 70, Georgia proudly walked every square inch of Philadelphia with her son, Ryan, when the Pope celebrated a historic Mass on the Ben Franklin Parkway. She marveled at Lake Michigan beaches last summer with her two beloved grandchildren, and floated the famous Madison River during a family reunion in Ennis, Montana. Georgia never lost her love for the outdoors, between decades hiking and camping the Rockies in the 1970s to another exploring the inimitable New England coastline and quaint charm of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, with her two youngest boys in the 1990s.

Georgia was preceded in death by her father, her mother, and one sister, Marian Sullivan.

She will be profoundly missed by her sons: Derek Jensen (Teresa), Paul Jensen (Teresa), Ryan Gilbert, and Josh Gilbert; her siblings Carol Sullivan, John Sullivan (Mary Maguire), Rita Sullivan, Pat Sullivan, Laurie Maddox (John), Maureen Sullivan, and James Sullivan; her grandchildren Rourke Jensen and Emelia Jensen, as well as countless close friends whose lives she lit up.

Funeral Mass will be held Tuesday, February 20, 2018, at 11 am at Saint Joseph Catholic Church in Ogden, Utah. A viewing will be held Monday evening, February 19, 2018, from 6 to 8 pm, at Aaron's Mortuary, 496 24th Street, Ogden, Utah. Interment, Ogden City Cemetery.