

Gayle Lea Sheppard Obituary

Gayle Lea Sheppard (née Drummey), aged 82, died March 28, 2021, due to complications of Alzheimer's disease in Ocala, Florida. She was born 4 December 1938, to William J Drummey and Olive J Gardinier. Gayle grew up in Longmeadow, Massachusetts, as part of a large extended family that included five brothers and one sister. She attended primary school in Longmeadow, Massachusetts, and then Northfield School for Girls, graduating in 1956. She studied physical therapy at the Bouve-Boston Institute at Tufts University, receiving her degree in 1960. Later in life she returned to graduate school at the University of Delaware and earned a masters degree in education, specializing in learning disabilities and reading. She taught at The Pilot School in Wilmington, Delaware, from 1983 to 1999.

Growing up, Gayle was a tomboy. She tagged along with her three older brothers and their friends, and generally beat them at any game that involved running. She had the physical and emotional drive of an athlete, and an enthusiastic nature that showed in everything she did.

On August 20, 1960, Gayle married her high-school sweetheart and the love of her life, David Elson Sheppard. Over the next 60 years they raised three children and embarked on a series of adventures. At various times, the family had home bases in Baltimore, Portland, Santa Barbara, Vancouver, Los Angeles, and Salt Lake City, while living most of the time in Newark, Delaware. Gayle loved to discover new places and

immerse herself in new experiences. She was always learning something new, and instilled that approach to life in her children. Together she and Dave traveled across the country five or six times, with their last trip tracing the journey of Lewis and Clark. Family summer vacations with their children generally involved camping or backpacking, along with visits to family in New England.

Teaching and mentoring, whether formally or in a family setting, was a main driver of Gayle's life. Her students, her children, and their friends, all got complete immersion in interesting topics, and her enthusiasm was infectious. Her grandchildren received special attention at "Gramma Camp" on summer vacations or spring break. And of course, the whole family received lots of instruction in the kitchen with Gayle in charge.

After her family, Gayle's greatest love was music. She played, at various times in her life, cello, piano, and guitar. She sang in school and church choirs from her teens well into her 60s, but what she loved most was to sing with family around the piano, a tradition that started when she was a child. Many fond family memories center around Gayle at home on the piano or by a campfire with guitar in hand, playing and singing favorite family tunes with everyone joining in.

Gayle was predeceased by her husband David, her parents, and four of her brothers (William J. Drummey Jr, Charles E. Drummey, James O. Drummey, and John E. Drummey). Gayle is survived by her sister, Olive "Birdie" Shaw, and brother, William J. Drummey II; her three children, Rebecca Jean Sheppard (Christopher Mark), Paul

Owen Sheppard (Mary Sharon Davis), and Marc Andrew Sheppard (SJ Thoreson); four grandsons, Daniel Crosier Siders, Benjamin Davis Sheppard, Joshua Paul Sheppard, and Thoreson Liam Sheppard; 10 nieces and nephews; and a host of great nieces and great nephews.

A joint memorial service for Gayle and David Sheppard will be held in October 2021 at the Northfield Mount Hermon School in Mount Hermon, Massachusetts. Family and friends are encouraged to post photos and reminisces at the web site:

gaylesheppard.com. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations in Gayle's name to the Sheffield Scholarship Fund at Northfield Mount Hermon School. Contributions can be sent through the following link: <https://www.nmhschool.org/give>. Sheffield Scholarship Fund should be noted in Gift Instructions.

Contributions noted for the fund can also be mailed to:

NMH

Advancement Office

One Lamplighter Way

Mount Hermon, MA 01354

Condolences may be sent to the family at gaylesheppardestate@gmail.com.

The family would like to express their gratitude to the staff of the Memory Support Unit of Brentwood at Fore Ranch and Kindred Hospice for their loving care of Gayle during her final months.