

Karin Woodruff Jackson
February 27, 1940 – October 15, 2023



Harpswell -Karin Marie Zetterstrom was born on February 27, 1940, in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, and grew up in Canaan, Connecticut, the first daughter of Olle and Martha Zetterstrom, both natives of Sweden. Younger brother Tom and sister Ingrid were born several years later.

A curious and whimsical child, Karin treasured reading books in her special nook in the rocks above the family's limestone quarry. Karin graduated from Housatonic Valley Regional High School in 1958 where she was a member of the National Honor Society and active in numerous groups and clubs

She taught ballet and worked as a lifeguard and swimming instructor which were precursors to her passion and vocation - teaching. Additionally, travel to Sweden and Norway and a memorable family car trip through the national parks sparked a life-long love of travel.

Karin attended Sarah Lawrence College where she majored in English literature, graduating with honors in 1962. While at Sarah Lawrence, she developed many life-long friendships, and remained an active alumna throughout her life.

In 1964, she earned her master's degree in education at Stanford University. Having met and married Neville Woodruff in California, they landed teaching positions at the American International School in Vienna, Austria from 1965-1967.

They returned to the U.S. to teach at the Woodstock Country School in Vermont where their son Alex was born in 1967. The family moved to Boston in 1968 where Karin engaged in peace and justice causes inspired by Father Drinan, dean of the Boston College law school and prominent anti-war activist. Her second son Stephen Woodruff was born in 1970. Shortly after moving to New Gloucester, Maine, the couple divorced in 1973. Karin settled her family in the commercial fishing village of Cundy's Harbor, a small coastal community where the boys could run wild and free through the village, woods, and to the beach at Sandy Cove.

In 1974, Karin began teaching courses in women's studies at the University of Southern Maine. She earned a second master's degree in English at Tufts University in 1977, focusing on women writers including Virginia Wolf, Jane Austen, and Sarah Orne Jewett.

Karin taught college writing, English literature, and women's studies at Westbrook College in Portland from 1979-1987. Governor Joseph Brennan appointed her to the Maine Commission on Women in which she was active from 1979-1982. She served as president of the Jane Austen Society of Maine and was a long-time participant in a local women's French group. From 1988 until her retirement in 2008, she taught college writing, literature, major women writers and modern literature at the University of Maine at Augusta (UMA). Many of her courses became the foundation for the department of women's studies at the UMA. During these years, she also led several summer literary tours to England. She was a dedicated teacher who cared and nurtured her students' intellectual pursuits and their personal development leading to lifelong friendships.

In 1982, Karin met her love Robert "Bob" Jackson, and they married on July 23, 1983. To her two sons, Karin added Bob's three daughters, who became as dear to Karin as any daughters could ever be. In their retirement, Karin and Bob made numerous trips to Europe, Canada, and throughout America. They spent time with friends and relatives, always hosting lively summer lobster feeds at the Harbor. They valued their church communities and were active members of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Brunswick and All Saints by The Sea chapel on Bailey Island. Enjoying over forty years of marriage, Karin and Bob shared a love of history, art, dance, literature, classical music, opera, and fine foods and wines.

Karin was preceded in death by her parents Olle and Martha Zetterstrom. She is survived by her loving husband Robert; sons Alex (Lindie) Woodruff and Stephen (Elizabeth) Woodruff; stepdaughters Joan (Keith) Mummert, Ann (Jim) Hutson, and Gale Jackson; siblings Tom Zetterstrom and Ingrid Saterstrom; nephews Mark and Daniel Menges, and beloved grandchildren Patrick Hutson, Cate Hutson, Thomas Woodruff, Stephen Woodruff, and Emma Woodruff.

Funeral services will be held at St. Paul's Episcopal Church at 11 a.m. on October 28, 2023. A livestream of the service is available on the church's website. An additional memorial service and celebration of life is being planned on Bailey Island for July 2024.

The family is sincerely grateful for the outstanding physicians and providers who cared for her over the last years, especially Dr. Paul Hyman and the Mid Coast Hospital team, the Brunswick Aging Excellence team, and CHANS hospice.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Karin's memory to the Cundy's Harbor Library or the Mid Coast Hunger Prevention Program (MCHPP).