

DONOR STORIES

TIM AND MARILYN HURLEY “Marilyn Ann Hurley Scholarship Fund”



MARILYN HURLEY

On May 17, 1945 Marilyn Ann Stephenson was born to Don and Virginia Stephenson. The youngest of three sisters, Marilyn was born and raised in Waterloo, Iowa. Marilyn attended St. John's School, and from an early age showed great promise in the area of art.

In 9th grade, Marilyn met her future husband, Tim Hurley. Marilyn and Tim dated throughout high school. After graduation, Marilyn went north to study at the Layton School of Art in Milwaukee. Tim went to school in Rolla, Missouri to study engineering.

Following her education at Layton, Marilyn returned to Waterloo and did freelance artwork for Black's Department Store, Walker's Shoes and Braley's Women's Wear.

After their marriage in November of 1966, Marilyn and Tim moved back to Rolla so that Tim could finish school. While in Missouri, Marilyn did art work for the local newspaper and Tim finished his education in engineering.

Once Tim completed his education, the couple decided to settle in Waterloo and start a family. Tim began his career with John Deere and Marilyn began raising their family as a stay at home mom - doing some freelance work on the side. The Hurley's were blessed with three beautiful children, Andrea Lynn (1968), Jennifer Marie (1971) and Christopher Joseph (1976).

“For my mom, Marilyn Ann Stephenson Hurley, who in her life, taught me to be curious about the world of nature, to see beauty in the smallest of creatures and the grandest landscapes, and most of all, to love.”

~Jennifer Marie (Hurley) O'Hara

Once the children got a little older, Marilyn began concentrating on art projects again. Her artistic talents came through in everything she did. Her home was exquisitely decorated for holidays and special family occasions. She began painting again, and her love for Iowa became apparent in the beautiful watercolor landscape portraits she created. In her late 30's, Marilyn began her volunteer efforts at the Junior Art Gallery using her artistic talents to benefit the Gallery in various ways such as creating brochures and other marketing materials. Her impact on the Junior Art Gallery helped to bring about success in that new endeavor.

In 1986, Marilyn was diagnosed with cancer. This discovery changed the way she lived her life. After her diagnoses, Marilyn took hold of her life and really started to live fully. She began doing the things in her life that she had always dreamed of doing. One special memory that Tim has of Marilyn was when they visited Rome. It had been a lifelong dream of Marilyn's to visit the Sistine Chapel. As she stood in front of Michaelangelo's work, Marilyn had tears running down her face in pure amazement and admiration of his artistic talent. It was truly a dream trip for her.

During this phase of Marilyn's life, she began taking classes at The University of Northern Iowa. She studied many things from art to history. She even began teaching art classes at the Rec Center, now known as the Waterloo Center for the Arts. Marilyn was a featured artist in the community and had exhibits at city hall in both Waterloo and Cedar Falls, participated in numerous art shows and displayed her work in murals for the Junior Art Gallery. Her art sustained her, and she could often be found sitting crossed-legged on the floor working on an art project. Her sweet disposition was so appreciated by her family and friends as well as her lovely smile that could brighten up any room.

For 11 years, Marilyn battled cancer in one form or another until it finally took her life on February 28, 1997. Her family and friends stayed close to Marilyn and helped her to celebrate her life up until the very end. Tim credits three very close friends, Amy Lockard, Kathy McCoy and Ginger Penaluna for keeping Marilyn's spirits high and helping her get through her many health struggles. Tim thinks that their love and friendship easily added a quality year to her life.

Following her death, Tim chose to set up an art scholarship in memory of Marilyn with the Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa. This scholarship will help budding artists to achieve their dreams of continuing their art studies.

The Hurley's middle child, Jennifer Marie (Hurley) O'Hara dedicated her thesis to her mom, and her dedication shows her appreciation for the wonderful person Marilyn was:

“For my mom, Marilyn Ann Stephenson Hurley, who in her life, taught me to be curious about the world of nature, to see beauty in the smallest of creatures and the grandest landscapes, and most of all, to love.”