



## Kathleen Ann Watson

December 31, 2019

“When you love someone, you do not love them all the time, in exactly the same way, from moment to moment. It is an impossibility.

And yet this is exactly what most of us demand. We have so little faith in the ebb and flow of life, of love, of relationships. We leap at the flow of the tide and resist in terror its ebb. We are afraid it will never return. We insist on permanency, on duration, on continuity; when the only continuity possible, in life as in love, is in growth, in fluidity – in freedom, in the sense that the dancers are free, barely touching as they pass, but partners in the same pattern.

The only real security is not in owning or possessing, not in demanding or expecting, not in hoping, even. Security in a relationship lies neither in looking back to what was in nostalgia, nor forward to what it might be in dread or anticipation, but living in the present relationship and accepting it as it is now.

Relationships must be like islands, one must accept them for what they are here and now, within their limits – islands, surrounded and interrupted by the sea, and continually visited and abandoned by the tides.”

Anne Morrow Lindbergh in *Gift from the Sea*

\*\*\*This poem was found posted at Kathy's desk.

Mother, grandmother, partner, and writer and editor par excellence Kathleen Watson died tragically and far too soon in Phoenix on December 31, 2019, at the age of 75.

Kathy was born August 19, 1944, on a U.S. Navy base in Jacksonville, Florida, to Bill and Althea Watson. She had two sons, Tad and Toby, with former husband Pat Kubler; one daughter, Janet Roth; and four grandchildren. She shared the last 18 years of her life with partner, Paul "Doc" Martin.

In 1989, at age 45, Kathy earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in communication from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. She went on to complete a master's in communication from Northwestern University in 2001, at age 57.

She founded her own writing and editing business, Word Works, in 1990, under the slogan "Making words work for you," taking clients from the corporate world and academia over the next three decades. Long known as "the Ruthless Editor," Kathy wrote and published her first book in 2016 at age 72, *Grammar for People Who Hate Rules*. She continued to publish an email newsletter on language tips up until her death. An indefatigable worker who couldn't help but stay busy, she had planned to finally retire in March of this year.

The epitome of grace and elegance, Kathy carried herself with a ballerina's poise and an air of inherent authority. Her voice was soft but direct. When she was with you, it was obvious that she was fully present and paying attention, that what you said mattered. She could have taught a master class in the arts of patience, tact, and discretion. She loved to talk, share stories, and

judiciously dole out advice—she gave her loved ones autonomy and encouraged them to learn for themselves.

Her love of learning came from the heart. She was proud of earning her two degrees as an adult. She herself traveled frequently and fearlessly. She loved to meet new people, was constantly hungry for knowledge, loved asking questions, and was involved in book clubs, discussion groups, and workshops.

She deliberately sought out the perspectives of people with different experiences from hers, and the opinions of people she didn't agree with. One of her favorite quotes was "To improve is to change. To perfect is to change often."

Kathy's superpower was making things last. In the words of her mother, she would "Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without." She took remarkable care of her things as well as her body. As a result, even in her seventies, she was pleased that she could still wear clothes from as far back as high school. Her impeccable, timeless sense of taste helped in this regard, as did the fact that she ate like a sparrow on a diet. She kept every memento ever given to her by another person.

She treated her personal relationships with similar conscientiousness and affection, and maintained friendships for life. She remembered people and made a point of remembering in acute detail what they said to her, jotting countless items down on scraps of paper that are still hiding all over her house. She understood the power of kindness and continually strove to do the right thing in every aspect of her life. She readily made sacrifices for her children, always putting their safety and well-being ahead of her own wants. She never failed to send a thank-you note after a dinner or gathering with

friends or acquaintances.

Kathy had a marvelous sense of humor and could laugh at herself without hesitation. In contrast to her publicly punctilious demeanor, around those closest to her she had a fondness for sarcasm and dark jokes, and cheerfully teased and was teased by those she loved. Most of the music she listened to was recommended by her children. She took evident pride in having a rock star for a son and was equally proud of her other son being an educator—the juxtaposition pleased her.

In 2017, Kathy reconnected with Janet, the daughter she relinquished for adoption many years earlier. She was deeply happy to discover that Janet had been raised by a loving family and led a thriving life that included a successful career and a husband and three children of her own. That Janet's family so warmly welcomed her into their life was a source of enduring joy for Kathy.

Kathy saw herself as forever young, always seeing the world anew. She is survived by partner Paul, sons Tad and Toby, daughter Janet, grandchildren Murphy Penn and Rachel, Kyle, and Charlie Roth, brother Bill "Salty" Watson Jr., and sister Eve Watson.

In lieu of flowers, please make a donation in her name to the National League of American Pen Women:

# Tribute Wall

JC

“ 4th May 2020I have only just heard the news, and was so very sad to hear that Kathy is not with us any more. My contact with Kathy came about through a mutual friend, Carol Birch, who made the connection between us because of our shared interests. Commitment to effective communication and correct grammar, along with a passion for learning and personal development being important to us both. I will so much miss our email exchanges, especially the thoughts Kathy shared on my EQ4U website monthly updates on as well as the learning I achieved from her regular articles as well as her invaluable grammar book. My heartfelt condolences to all her family and friends.Love & warmest thoughts from a friend across the pond – Jan x

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**Jan Childs** - May 04, 2020 at 04:57 PM

LT

“ We were so sorry to hear about Kathy’s untimely and senseless passing. She was a member of the Wine Club in our community and has been a wonderful guest in our home. We were the recipients of one of her gracious thank-you notes mentioned in the obituary after an event in our home. Such a very gracious woman and she will be missed by so many. Condolences to Paul and her family. /Lynda + Earl Towery, Sun City Festival, Buckeye, AZ

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**Lynda / Earl Towery** - January 15, 2020 at 12:43 PM