



Rosemary Gwyther

October 7, 1938 - March 25, 2017

"Three things in human life are important," said the American-born English writer Henry James. "The first is to be kind. The second is to be kind. And the third is to be kind."

Rosemary Gwyther, a fellow Britisher and great admirer of James, lived those words until the day she died, on March 25, at age 78.

"She was the most wonderfully kind, loving, thoughtful, inclusive person," said Wyn Gilbert, a fellow travel agent who shared an office with her at Travel 100 Group in Kenilworth for over 20 years. "Everybody would say, 'Oh, I love Rosemary.' She just had that ability to be in the hearts of people."

"She was always happy. I don't think she ever said an unkind word about anybody, no matter what," said Barbara Peterson, who also worked with Gwyther at Travel 100 Group and has known her for 40 years.

Travel 100 Group owner Howard Scharf recalled that Gwyther "was always so grateful and thankful. And she didn't just say thank you. She took the time to write notes, to do it in the 'proper way.'"

In one note to him, meant to buck up his spirits, which he had saved, she wrote: "I was brought up with a poem; gratitude is riches. complaint is poverty,"

which helped one ride the waves of challenges in life...In today's lingo, 'I have your back,' and will be supportive in any way I can."

Gwyther was an "exemplary Christian Scientist who lived her life based on loving everyone around her, wherever she was," said Jennifer Glaser, her ex-sister-in-law and "best friends forever."

Gwyther grew up in Brighton, England, worked in marketing at Vogue Magazine in London, then moved to New York City, where she worked in the 1960s in the Vogue fashion department under legendary editor-in-chief Diana Vreeland.

In 1979, she and her husband Basil moved to Kenilworth. She soon began working at Travel 100 Group, where she had been ever since.

Basil died in 1988, and Gwyther raised their son Jonathan alone.

"She was a fabulous mom who always put Jonathan first, always," Gilbert said.

Gwyther also began connecting with the special needs community, volunteering with the Special Olympics, Center for Independent Futures and other special needs organizations.

One of her joys for many years was taking Brian, who has cerebral palsy, and Claudia, who is blind, to the Ridgeview Grill weekly for breakfast. "They're just my little buddies on Saturday morning," she said a few years back.

"Every single Saturday, rain or shine, she never had anything that was more important or superseded that commitment to them," Gilbert said.

Gwyther, who never lost her lilting aristocratic British accent, was unabashedly devoted to her mother country and the British Royal Family.

"She liked the principle that Britain runs under the ethics of England, and the Queen is the head. And she loved the pageantry," Glaser said.

"She was so English, and she always celebrated that Englishness, and she had such a love of country," Gilbert said.

At the Travel 100 Group, Gwyther was part of a "lunch bunch" that ate in the office most days. "There was the Queen's seat, and we would say, 'is the Queen coming today,'" Anne Kennedy said. "She did not have an easy life, but you would never know it," added Kennedy. "And she always found a way to embrace you."

Not one to haphazardly engage in potentially contentious political conversation, she nonetheless was eager recently to offer her support for Brexit, which put her in line with many older British subjects. When asked why she supported it, she said: "My dear, because England must remain England."

Among the joys in her life was her annual New Year's Day party, a classic Afternoon English Tea, complete with scones and clotted cream with strawberry jam and watercress and cucumber sandwiches on thin-sliced white crustless bread.

On one wall of her home were formal photographs of her mother modeling hats. She was a milliner on Bond Street in London in the 1930s and sold hats to courtiers of the Royal Family.

Gwyther took particular pleasure in going to England to celebrate the Royal

Wedding of Prince William and Catherine Middleton and the Diamond Jubilee of Elizabeth II.

In her spare time, Gwyther enjoyed the theatre and ballet, and was an active volunteer and usher with the Writers Theater in Glencoe.

The Tuesday after her death, many travel agent friends gathered to celebrate her life. Margery Coen, traveling aboard, sent an email.

"As I lit a candle for Rosemary at a Buddhist shrine here in Sri Lanka I began to think about some of her many special traits: her love for and devotion to Jonathan, her loyalty to the country of her birth, her love of the arts, her big warm ready smile, her intolerance of life's absurdities, her acceptance of and joy in all kinds of different people and experiences. Our lunch bunch will miss our 'Queen,' always smiling, listening and ready with a perceptive observation or witty riposte. We will all miss her and are so lucky to have traveled in this life with her."

A celebration of life will be held on Thursday, April 6, 2017 at 5:00 p.m. at the Second Church of Christ, Scientist, 2715 Hurd Ave. Evanston, IL. Memorial contributions can be made to the Jonathan GB Gwyther, Special needs trust, c/o Chase Bank, Ashley Posner, 15303 Ventura Blvd. Suite 900, Sherman Oaks, CA 91403. For info: 847-362-3009.

Tribute Wall

NB

“ Rosemary was a volunteer for Special Olympics. I had the honor of talking to her two days before Her untimely passing. She will be missed.

Norm Berliant - April 27, 2018 at 04:21 AM

JS

“ I am so sorry to her she is passed away. She was a great person. Sorry for you're loss.

John Stavropoulos - April 27, 2018 at 04:21 AM



“ Rosemary is a wonderful, warm soul who always greeted you with a smile and sincere conversation. When I received the news of her passing, I was enjoying a fabulous dinner in a small town in Florida called Rosemary Beach. How fitting that Rosemary was still serving as a terrific travel guide, forever the beautiful caring daughter of our Father Mother Love.

April 09, 2017 at 12:00 AM