

In Memory of Karen Bland

Karen Burlingham Bland passed away after battling cancer for 27 years on Saturday, July 13, 2024 in Napa surrounded by family and friends. She was a gracious daughter, a loving wife, a super mom, and a selfless grandma. She devoted her life to her children, Michael Bland (Alexis) and Dori Lentsch (Josh) and her four grandchildren whom she adored, Bode and Gavin Lentsch and Eloise and Kasten Bland. She will be missed greatly by her friends, surviving family, and the community in which she lived.

Karen was born on September 16, 1960 in Portland, Oregon and grew up in Forest Grove with two wonderful sisters. She met her husband, Mark, at the Hillsboro swimming pool during the summer of 1979. He hired her as his assistant swim coach, sight unseen, purely based on her collegiate swimming credentials. Throughout that summer, they worked together as life guards, swim instructors, and swim coaches where they became best friends and co-workers at the pool.

She married Mark in the summer of 1984 after his first year in Veterinary School at Oregon State. The second year of Veterinary school was at Washington State and she did not want to be separated from him any longer.

From contributing her time to their elementary school as a Yard Duty and serving on their various schools' PTAs, to helping run their community swim pool while also serving as President of the Napa Valley Swim Team while Dori swam and continued to assist the team well after as their Team Administrator. She was deeply committed to her children's education and extracurricular activities, always looking for opportunities to help.

Karen also found time to work as Mark's executive assistant in his poultry veterinary consulting practice for over 26 years. While he traveled through 5 states and British Columbia, Canada visiting clients, she organized his travel, managed his billing, and hosted numerous high school, undergraduate, and veterinary students while they externed with Mark. The two-week student externships kept Karen busy entertaining, making weekend Napa travel itineraries, and making home cooked meals for the students. She was like a den mother to the students and she loved sharing her home with them.

When Karen did find time to relax, she enjoyed hiking through numerous National Parks, including Yellowstone (her favorite) and Glacier National Park. Karen learned to fly fish at Mark's behest. They went on several extensive fly fishing trips to Patagonia (Chile) and New Zealand. Last year, they went to Brazil searching for Peacock Bass and intended to go back again in 2024 and 2025.

Karen is survived by her husband, Mark; her son, Michael; her daughter Dori; her mother, Ruth; her sister, Sheri; and her 4 grandchildren. She was predeceased by her father, George; her sister, Dori.

In remembrance of Karen and her many contributions to the poultry industry, the family asks that donations be made to the Western Poultry Scholarship & Research Foundation ("WPSRF") or the American Association of Avian Pathologist ("AAAP").

Donations may be mailed to WPSRF/1521 I Street/Sacramento, CA 95814 for the "Mark and Karen endowment".

Donations may be mailed to AAAP Foundation / 12627 San Jose Blvd., Suite 202 Jacksonville, FL 32223-8638 for the Karen B. Bland Memorial Scholarship.