



## Elizabeth "Betsy" Winslow Wagner

April 1, 1943 - July 8, 2023

Elizabeth "Betsy" Winslow Wagner, age 80, of Glen Arbor, Michigan (formerly of Birmingham, MI), passed away peacefully at home in Lake Forest, Illinois surrounded by family on July 8, 2023.

Born April 1, 1943 in New York City, Betsy was the daughter of the late Dr. Thomas Scudder Winslow, Jr. and the late Elizabeth Russell Winslow. Betsy grew up along the shores of the Hudson River in Riverdale, New York where she and her future husband, Bruce, would cross paths occasionally through family connections and even the same Kindergarten class. Betsy spent summers on the family island in the Muskoka Lakes, Ontario, Canada where she could be found paddling her canoe across the lake to visit friends or perfecting her barefoot water-skiing skills.

Filled with imagination and a zest for adventures, Betsy made lifelong friends while at the Riverdale Country School and during high school at Miss Hall's School. She graduated with distinction from Wells College, where she studied modern languages. At Wells she sang in the Wells College Choir and in the a capella group, Henry's VIII. During two college summers, Betsy traveled to Italy and France for work camps with the American Friends Service Committee, helping rebuild schools and roads in small towns. These experiences influenced Betsy spiritually and sparked an unending desire to help others.

After college, she joined Wells' friends in Boston where she worked at Harvard's East Asian Research Center. The following year Betsy moved to Florence, Italy where she helped set up and run a summer school for American college students, witnessed the terrible flood of 1966, and lived for two years. Upon her return to the United States, she earned a Master of Arts in Italian Literature from New York University. To know Betsy was to appreciate her deep love of Italian life and her passion for travel. This interest was given full expression during her years as a New York travel agent for which she explored the globe on scouting trips.

Betsy married Bruce S. Wagner in 1975 in New York City. Soon after their wedding, they moved to Washington D.C. where Betsy joined Bruce as he managed the advertising on President Gerald Ford's 1976 Primary Election campaign and she replied to voters' correspondence. Returning home to New York, Betsy worked as the Assistant to the Curator of the Gilbert & Sullivan Collection of original manuscripts and librettos in NYC's Morgan Library.

In 1978, they moved to Birmingham, Michigan for what was meant to be a two-year assignment for Bruce's work in Detroit, but instead, turned into their family's forever home. Here, Betsy happily balanced the joys of motherhood and raising her family with her many interests and talents. An avid viola player from the day her 6th grade music teacher handed her a viola, Betsy played with the Royal Oak Symphony Orchestra and the Birmingham Musicale String Ensemble. Betsy supported the local arts as an active board member of the Cranbrook Music Guild. Forever an athlete and competitor at heart, Betsy found time to keep up her squash game as a state-ranked women's squash player. She also enjoyed family ski trips and tennis - and would never turn down a game of bocce.

Betsy followed her love of books and languages to her children's school,

Detroit Country Day School, where she was a language tutor and librarian. It brought her great joy to help the next generation discover the world through books and the many languages she tutored including French, Spanish, German and Latin.

Upon her and Bruce's retirement, they settled in Glen Arbor on northern Michigan's idyllic Leelanau Peninsula. Betsy spent many years dedicated to volunteering with Glen Arbor's local organizations in support of the natural beauty and wildlife surrounding their home next to the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. An active board member for many years with the Glen Arbor Arts Center, Betsy was instrumental in establishing and growing the annual Manitou Music Festival and artist-in-residence program. During the frosty Michigan winters and delightful summers at their Lake Michigan beach cottage, Betsy enjoyed writing regular book reviews for the Cottage Book Shop.

Betsy cared deeply for her family, friends and neighbors by writing letters, sharing humorous stories or lending a helping hand. Betsy was so proud of her children, Sage and Alexander, and loved encouraging their careers and interests. She and Bruce rediscovered city life again as they spent time in Chicago visiting grandchildren.

All who knew her gentle soul were touched by her kindness, selflessness and the love she had for her husband, children, grandchildren and lifelong friends. Betsy was loved and respected by so many. Since her passing, friends near and far have reached out to share their memories of Betsy - her sweet smile and laugh, the adventures traveling and photographing through Europe, spending a winter in a remote Swiss Alps' village, and long walks (and talks) through the woods of Leelanau County.

Betsy is survived by her husband of 47 years Bruce, daughter Sage (Martin) Wodarz, son Alexander, brother Thomas (Sheila) Winslow, sister Gale Minot, as well as her grandson Owen Wodarz and granddaughter Parker Wodarz. Betsy is preceded in death by her beloved sister Wendy Lofting.

A memorial service will be taking place on Friday, September 15, 2023 at 11:00 am at the Glen Lake Community Reformed Church in Glen Arbor, Michigan. A time of visitation will be from 10:00 - 11:00 am. Graciously, the church has allowed for the Reverend Derek Quinn of Grace Episcopal Church to preside over the service. A private burial at the Maple Grove Cemetery in nearby Empire, Michigan will take place on a different day. Those wishing an expression of sympathy may wish to consider a contribution to the Leelanau Conservancy by visiting [www.leelanauconservancy.org](http://www.leelanauconservancy.org) or to the Glen Arbor Arts Center by visiting [www.glenarborart.org](http://www.glenarborart.org).

Illinois Info. – Reuland & Turnbough Funeral Directors of Lake Forest (847) 234-9649 or [RTfunerals.com](http://RTfunerals.com).

# Previous Events

## Visitation

SEP **15.** 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Glen Lake Community Reformed Church  
4902 W. MacFarlane Road  
Glen Arbor, IL 49636

## Memorial Service

SEP **15.** 11:00 AM (ET)

Glen Lake Community Reformed Church  
4902 W. MacFarlane Road  
Glen Arbor, MI 49636

# Tribute Wall

FB

“ Dear Winslow,  
The times we spent together when you were at Wells and I was at  
Cornell were the happiest of my life. Miss you, Love you. Rest in  
Peace.  
Blatch

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**Frank Blatchford** - November 11, 2023 at 10:45 PM

FB

“ Dear Winslow,  
I will never forget the wonderful times we  
spent together when you were in your first  
years at Wells. I miss you. Love you. Rest in  
Peace.  
Blatch



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**Frank Blatchford** - November 09, 2023 at 10:28 PM