



## Mary Ann Gudermuth

October 7, 1948 - September 6, 2023

MaryAnn "Miki" Gudermuth, 74, of Cape Girardeau went to her heavenly home on Wednesday, September 6, 2023, after a short but hard-fought battle with a recently diagnosed disease. Born on October 7, 1948, Miki was no stranger to hard battles. She contracted polio at nine months old and spent the majority of her younger years in Schreiners Hospital where she endured multiple surgeries on her hips, legs, and feet.

At the age of three, Miki was adopted by Alvin and Anna Richardson of St. Louis. Her new parents gave her the love and support she needed to thrive. They also encouraged her to live her life to its fullest, despite having a disability.

In 1951, Miki was the poster child for March of Dimes in St Louis. During her time at March of Dimes, she charmed the crowds by singing and entertaining them.

Miki began drawing and painting as a young child. She taught herself to paint as a way to pass long days spent in the hospital. By the time she was an adult, Miki excelled in the art world and won numerous awards for her paintings and drawings. She taught art classes at a community college in Tennessee where she lived at the time. She also opened a business called Pawtraits by Miki. These pet portraits were in high demand, keeping her busy

shipping paintings all over the world.

In December, 1980, Miki married Chuck, the love of her life. They spent 41 years together. Chuck was Miki's greatest supporter and he helped behind the scenes in all her endeavors. Sadly, Chuck passed away in 2021.

In the early 90s, Miki and Chuck became a host family for international students attending SEMO. They formed lasting relationships with their Malaysian kids and grandkids who kept in touch and still visited their American parents in Cape Girardeau.

Miki was a very vocal supporter for civil rights and equality for everyone- especially individuals with disabilities. Her accomplishments through the years are too numerous to list but include: opening SEMO Alliance for Disability Independence (SADI) in 1993. The small nonprofit started 1987 as a polio support group in Miki's home and grew into a center for independent living, providing services to people with disabilities. SADI continues to grow and it has been a part of the community for 30 years.

In her role of advocate, Miki served on several local, state, and national boards as a representative of individuals with disabilities. She became known as the local spokesperson for disability rights and related issues. In 1987 Miki was appointed to the Governor's Council on Disabilities and became the local liaison for employment for the disabled. Miki also served on the state Mental Health Advisory Board, the Board of Directors for Support Dogs Incorporated, and the Board of Gibson Recovery Center, just to name a few.

She also received many awards through the years such as the Easter Seals Personal Achievement Award in 1994, Zonta Woman of Achievement Award in 2007, St. Francis Disability Leadership Award in 2012, and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Missouri State Independent Living Council for

Advocacy and Leadership in Independent Living in 2013. The list could go on and on.

Miki was preceded in death by her husband, Chuck, and parents. She is survived by a cousin, Kenny Machamer of St. Louis, and her dear childhood friend Linda Carlson of Anaheim, California.

Miki retired from SADI in 2019 but continued to support disability related issues. She accomplished so much in her lifetime. Her grassroots work opened doors for others living with disabilities. SADI and the disability community lost a great leader and advocate. She will be missed by all who knew and loved her.

There will be a Celebration of Life on Saturday October, 7th at 10:00 a.m. in the Community Room at SADI. Memorial contributions may be given to SADI.

Memorial contributions may be made online at [fordandlileyfuneralhome.com](http://fordandlileyfuneralhome.com)

# Previous Events

## **Celebration of Life**

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OCT 7. 10:00 AM (CT)

COMMUNITY ROOM AT SADI  
755 S KINGS HWY  
CAPE GIRARDEAU, MO 63703

# Tribute Wall



“ *Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Mary Ann Gudermuth.*



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October 06, 2023 at 01:22 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Mary Ann Gudermuth.*



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September 21, 2023 at 02:03 PM