



Elizabeth Holmes

March 28, 2021

Elizabeth Holmes, 81, of Cedar Park, Texas, passed away on March 28, 2021, with her children and grandchildren surrounding her with love, music, and readings during her last day on this earth.

Born in 1940 in Illinois, the firstborn of Merrill W. and Henrietta E. Holmes, Ms. Holmes first attended primary school in a one-room schoolhouse on the farm before graduating from Bradford High School in 1958 as a valedictorian. She majored in English and Speech at Illinois Wesleyan University, where she graduated in 1962 as a salutatorian. Ms. Holmes was a member of the Phi Kappa Phi honor society. She took graduate-level coursework in Library Science at The University of Chicago and The University of Texas before earning a Master of Library and Information Science degree from the University of Rhode Island in 1986.

Ms. Holmes once said in a newspaper interview in 1988 while working as the children's librarian in Milford, NH, "I grew up on a farm in Illinois and spent hours in the linden tree where I could sit and read. I read 'Tom Sawyer,' 'Pollyanna.' If I went inside, I was put to work. By disappearing, up in the tree, I had a private place." What her interviewer notes next is something those of us who have had the privilege of hearing Ms. Holmes tell a story immediately recognize, "her eyes widen, her face lights and it's not at all difficult to imagine the dreamy little girl sitting in the linden tree on the Illinois farm." Ms. Holmes

worked as a high school English teacher in Illinois, taught courses at the graduate level in New Hampshire, owned her own bookstore (Serendipity Book Service) in Texas, and worked as a librarian in school, college, special and public libraries for over four decades in Illinois, Texas, New Hampshire, and Maine. One of her greatest joys was bringing words alive as a storyteller wherever she lived, including Belize and England. She also enjoyed writing and published haiku poetry.

Ms. Holmes was also an avid writer of letters and corresponded regularly with family and friends, often including a carefully and perceptively chosen card, as well as clippings of articles that connected with something going on in the recipient's life. She and her first cousin Anne (Foster) Nott grew up together and remained good friends and correspondents throughout life.

As a young mother, she shared her love of words and her passion for books and storytelling with her three children. She created traditions that focused on caring for one another and creating shared experiences. For example, as an alternative gift-giving idea one year, she encouraged her children to write a note saying something fun they would do with their brother or sister and then deliver it in a tiny rectangular matchbox to their sibling. She also created a ½ birthday tradition, a celebratory ritual that has continued in the next generation. She valued one-on-one time with each of her children, especially out in nature, often delighting in whatever tiny leaf or small thing they would discover during their walk. She had a talent for seeing every child as an individual. For example, she encouraged each of her children to choose a spot in the backyard as their own "homestead." After a divorce from her children's father in 1978 and throughout her journey to find health and to realize her passion for bringing children and literature together, she stayed connected with her three children and five grandchildren through calls, gifting of books, and visits together. Ms. Holmes returned to Texas in 2002 to be nearer to her children and grandchildren.

Ms. Holmes is survived by her son, Mark (Nancy) and their children Connor and Katherine of Texas; twin daughter, Amy (Mitch) and their children David and Natalie of Georgia; twin daughter, Sarah (Bill) and their daughter Emily of Texas; and brother, James "Jim" (Michelle) Holmes of Florida. She is also survived by the father of her children, Warren. She was preceded in death by her parents, Merrill W. Holmes (2004), Henrietta Holmes (1999), sister Carole Y. Holmes (1979), and sister-in-law Esterida Holmes (1981).

Honoring her wishes, her children will scatter Ms. Holmes's ashes in nature. Therefore, there will not be a burial at Putnam Cemetery, Putnam, Illinois, but her children will place a memorial stone in the family's plot in Ms. Holmes's memory.

A memorial service, including an online option for those unable to travel, will be held later. The family will post details on Ms. Holmes's tribute page at Austin Natural Funerals. Per Ms. Holmes's request, should friends desire, they may send memorial contributions to the Alliance for Childhood, P.O. Box 5758, Annapolis, MD 21403, (202) 643-8242 <https://allianceforchildhood.org>

Tribute Wall



“ Elizabeth Holmes

October 14, 2022 at 12:02 PM



“ It saddens me that the world lost Elizabeth. She was a wonderful person and I always enjoyed her visits when I worked at Target. We would always wind up talking politics and it was a joy to hear her viewpoint. I am so glad that I met you, Elizabeth.

JoeB - August 23, 2021 at 09:30 PM



“ Thank you for offering this place to share memories of Elizabeth's gifts throughout her life. We met in Milford where she was Children's librarian in the '80s. About ten years later I remember helping her in Maine, where we lived nearby, looking to "thin out" some of her boxes. My happiest memory was the pajama story-telling with the children at night in the Gray library with hot cocoa and muffins for *Rikki Tikki Tavi*, enacted by Margaret's visiting family from England. Her spirit shone through many a test and strengthened all who met her with her generosity and persistence. These past years just hearing her on weekly calls reminds me of how perceptive and inclusive she was. Understanding people's differences and the ability to solve problems with true listening and entering into compassionate co-operation.

She is an inspiration to do better in the circles where listening to other points of view (all of them) can give rise to deepening family ties, getting along with neighbors, being more productive at work, having a more mature world view. Thank you all for sharing Elizabeth!

James (Carl) Hoesch

James (Carl) Hoesch - April 09, 2021 at 09:09 PM

MH

“ I too was gifted with meeting Elizabeth at Emerson College in England in 1979. We met at the mailbox under "H" and discovered that we had a mutual love of haiku, poetry and arts in general. Through the years since then, we shared and encouraged each other in whatever 'next step' we were contemplating. As we both moved - a lot - we understood the strategy of never unpacking all the boxes!

When my family visited us in Maine from England, Elizabeth arranged for us all to create a dramatized reading of Rudyard Kiplings' RikkiTikk-Tavi for the children in their PJ's at the Library. I always loved how interested Elizabeth was in others, how passionate about the need children have for stories to grow their imagination, how caring about the Earth and aware of the influence of the Stars. She was kind and gentle and, at the same time, had a great strength of soul to persevere.

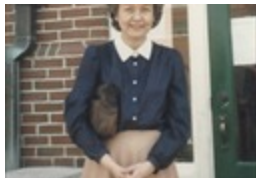
Her generosity of spirit was such that she told me that when she couldn't afford to send flowers, she would stand in the flower section of the store and send them through her heart anyway, through the ethers.

When she moved back to Texas, she was so proud of her children and grandchildren. She sent photos of everyone to her friends on the HeartLine Calls she participated in.

I will always be grateful for her enduring encouragement to follow my heart in my life and work.

I will always listen for your heart, dear friend, as you journey on.....

Margaret Heath



Margaret Heath - April 08, 2021 at 09:04 PM

RR

“ I met Elizabeth in 1979-80 at Emerson College in England. And though it was a long time ago now, what I do remember rather vividly was her thoughtfulness, her refined sensibilities, her kindness and her generosity of spirit. Meeting and getting to know Elizabeth at that time contributed to the shaping of one of the most significant years of my life.
May God bless her always.

Richard Reho - April 08, 2021 at 04:01 PM

AJ

“ Through Margaret I felt privileged to come to know Elizabeth....how very special her gifts were to so many...especially her beautiful heart. She connected in a special way with many...sending love from her heart...so beautiful. Angela Joel

Angela Joel - April 07, 2021 at 07:54 AM

UE

“ I remember once on the occasion of Emily Jones's birthday Elizabeth was sitting on the sofa with Emily explaining the special significance of a gift she was giving her for her birthday. I was not able to hear the conversation as it was private, but Emily was enthralled in what was being said. The thing that makes it stand out to me is it was taking place in a very crowded, very noisy room full of celebrating children, but to them they were the only ones in the room. It was such a sweet, sweet picture it is embedded in my memory.

Una Jones Englehart

Una Englehart - April 06, 2021 at 01:08 PM

AM

Una, Thank you for sharing this. Elizabeth did have an amazing ability to tune everything out and be present with the person in front of her. A true gift.

Amy - April 07, 2021 at 12:26 AM

AM

“ *Amy is following this tribute.*

Amy - April 02, 2021 at 11:53 PM