



## Margaret Livens Kornguth

April 2, 1935 - September 3, 2022

Margaret (Beatrice) Livens Kornguth, known to many as Peggy, died peacefully in the company of family on September 3, 2022, reuniting with "Stevela," her beloved husband. Margaret was an extraordinary woman who had to face many extraordinary moments - some of her own making and many not. She was loved by many and known to all as a dear person, possessor of a fierce intellect and even fiercer life force. Frequently the quietest in a room, she was almost always also among the keenest and kindest.

She was born in Riga, Latvia in 1935 to Irma and Herman Livens. As a child, she was the adored youngest in the family, raised not only by her parents but also by Elsa, her caretaker, who by all accounts doted on Margaret. When the war reached Riga, Margaret lost her father, grandmother, Elsa and her home, and traveled with her mother, brother John, sister Silvia and friend-sister Irene Hans to Europe, where they lived in Displaced Persons camps for three years. She arrived in Boston in 1950 as a teenager and after learning English, quickly earned academic successes that resulted in a scholarship to Wellesley College. After college, she sought to pursue academic research and was drawn to the University of Wisconsin PhD program in Physiological Chemistry.

In her first year of graduate school, in a required course on Organic Chemistry, she earned the attention of her fellow student, Steven Kornguth, who said he first noticed her because she was the smartest person in the

class and also the most beautiful. They married a year later and graduated together with PhDs in Biochemistry in 1961. Her dissertation was titled "B-Hydroxyaspartic Acid: Its Chemical and Biological Properties."

Margaret continued her professional career as a researcher at the Veteran's Hospital in Madison, and later as a consultant for Starks, CP, procuring promising anti-cancer agents for clinical research trials. As important as her work was to her, her children and her family were first priorities. She was always very present in her modest way, making her children, Ingrid and David, certain of her affection and inviting a sense of playfulness into home life.

She revealed a creative spirit in her youth working on wood inlays typical in Latvian cultural traditions and later, in pottery studios. She loved making and finding gifts for her special people. She was a fantastic writer, both informally as she wrote travelogues about family trips in the station wagon and also professionally, as she published numerous articles about her research. Margaret loved reading fiction and poetry, traveling, cooking, and fresh flowers, especially peonies and lilies,

The challenges she faced as a result of being a child during war time never diminished her spirit and her optimism - in fact, those childhood experiences seemed to have sharpened her awareness and appreciation for the good things she had.

Margaret reckoned with significant health challenges in her later years, and met them all with a steadfast and dogged spirit to survive and carry on. Steve was at her side throughout, reading her poems, sitting by her side listening to their favorite operas, and sneaking her decadent chocolates in between meals.

Her spirit remains vibrant in the hearts of her brother John (wife Cushing),

brother-in-law Martin (wife Phyllis), daughter Ingrid (husband James), son David (wife Ginger), and her grandchildren, Benjamin, Gabriela, Lindsay and Gregory.

Our family thanks the loving and skilled team in long-term care at Querencia. Throughout the almost eight years she was there, she received dedicated and attentive care. While all of the teams were unfailingly kind, gentle and supportive, we are especially grateful to Charlotte, Latif and Robin, who were there from her first day at Querencia to her last.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to Wellesley College at [www.wellesley.edu/giving/ways](http://www.wellesley.edu/giving/ways) and if so moved, acknowledge Margaret in the "Gifts of Honor" section.

# Tribute Wall



“ *Margaret Livens Kornguth*

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October 14, 2022 at 12:02 PM