

Regina Ursula Minudri

May 9, 1937 - June 18, 2021

Nationally known librarian Regina Minudri died on June 18, 2021 in her Berkeley home. Gina was born on May 9, 1937 in San Francisco to John and Molly Halter Minudri. Gina was a smart and precocious child, who learned to read before attending school. Her love of reading lead her into librarianship, where she created inventive ways to extend library services to her diverse community.

Gina graduated from San Francisco's Lone Mountain College, then received her Master's Degree in Library Science from UC Berkeley in 1959. Her first professional job was as reference librarian at the Menlo Park Library. She later served as young adult librarian in Mountain View, regional librarian at Santa Clara County Library, and Assistant Alameda County Librarian before becoming the Director of the Berkeley Public Library in 1977.

After the devastating effects of Prop 13 on public library financing, Gina was the first library director in California to turn to voters to secure library tax funding (1980) and she led the campaign to make that tax permanent with another successful 2/3 vote in 1988. Starting Berkeley's Tool Lending Library, developing a city-wide community information model, and establishing a library-based adult literacy program were other innovative services she initiated.

Gina lectured at UC Berkeley and San Jose Library School, was elected president of the California Library Association and later served as the president of the American Library Association. Throughout her career, Gina championed library services to youth, responsiveness to the public's library needs, and participative management in the workplace.

Gina retired from the Berkeley Public Library in 1994; the Board of Library Trustees honored her by designating her Library Director Emerita and by naming the library's Young Adult Room after her.

In 1997, Gina was called out of retirement to head the San Francisco Public Library, then struggling through several major crises. She stabilized SFPL's budget, appointed a Deputy City Librarian, and hired a Chief Financial Officer to begin the turnaround. Mayor Willie Brown, recognizing her leadership, allocated \$2.5 million for the construction of the first new branch library in the city in 30 years.

In 1999, Gina suffered a catastrophic stroke and was not expected to live. Partner Carol Starr headed a team of Gina's friends and colleagues who rallied around Gina—feeding her meals, exercising her body, and challenging her mind until Gina was able to return home. Despite the post-stroke effects, and with Carol's ever-present help, Gina resumed a life of traveling, attending family celebrations, and bursting out in Broadway musical songs whenever an opportunity arose.

Gina and Carol were married in October 2008 when California law allowed; they've been together 34 years.

Despite Carol's loving care, the deep love and support of her family and friends, plus the ongoing help of her attendants Irene Palos Lopez, Malani Shashitharan, and Lu Yang, Gina suffered a series of small strokes in 2020 and 2021.

Gina is predeceased in death by her sister Victoria Lavorini and nieces Tina Johnson and Pamela Jones. Gina is survived by her wife Carol Starr and her nieces and nephews, Mike Lavorini (Roni), Melissa Wolfenbarger, Tim Lavorini (Tony), Amanda Harper (Bud), Paul Lavorini (Michelle), and her great nieces and nephews Lea Harris (Justin), Dana Wolfenbarger (Trey), David Johnson, Molly Jones, Jenna Harper, Dylan Lavorini, Matthew Lavorini, Kyle Roy, Jayden Harper, and Nicole Lavorini.

A zoom memorial service will be held on July 3 at 1 pm with Pr. Sharon Stalkfleet of Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church presiding. Donations can be made to one of two scholarships, the Regina Minudri Scholarship Fund at the Friends of the Berkeley Public Library (c/o BPL, 2090 Kittredge St., Berkeley, CA 94704) or to the American Library Association's Regina U. Minudri Young Adult Scholarship (225 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 1300, Chicago, Il 60601).



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