



## Leona Larsen

November 9, 1935 - March 2, 2026

Leona Larsen of Grasonville, Maryland passed peacefully at her home on the morning of March 2, 2026. She was surrounded by family and friends at the time. Lee was born in Boston, Massachusetts on November 9, 1935. She is the daughter of Carl Christian Larsen and Elizabeth Starr Goodell Versailles Larsen and stepdaughter of Harvey George Versailles. Lee had one brother, Roy Larsen.

Lee's father Carl was born in Copenhagen, Denmark, and her mother was a published Harvard-educated certified genealogist from Williamsburg, Massachusetts with family ties dating back to the founding of the American colonies. Lee was very proud of heritage as a Danish American and sought to carry on her family's interest in educational excellence and thought leadership.

While growing up in Massachusetts, Lee developed a passion for nature, music, technology, and literature. Both Lee and Roy excelled in the arts and were accomplished pianists. After completing her undergraduate studies at Tufts University in 1958, Lee pursued a Masters in English from University of Massachusetts Amherst in 1967. Lee began her career as an English teacher in Montgomery County's Public Schools, Maryland, where she taught for over 30 years. During Lee's teaching career, computer technology was just emerging as a valuable tool for student learning. Lee embraced the new

technology in her role as a reading specialist, becoming one of the school's first computer specialists.

While living in the Washington, D.C. area, Lee met her future husband, Rene Gautschi, a native of Zurich, Switzerland. A successful architect with Marriott Corporation, Rene traveled the world and Lee joined, when time allowed, from China to Hawaii, Dubai to Mexico. When Lee's grandchildren, Elizabeth (Liz) and George were in need of a stable home, Lee took over guardianship of them when they were 9 and 2 years old, respectively.

Lee thrived as both mother and grandmother to Liz and George and the family relocated to Grasonville, Maryland in 1994 where Lee met Nora, who quickly became a part of the family and a second mother to Lee's grandkids. Lee and Rene settled into the Eastern Shore lifestyle and Lee's stepson Mathew (Mat) joined his father in developing a passion for sailing on the Chesapeake Bay. Mat and Rene shared their hobby with Liz and George, who both became avid sailors and would join them on family boat trips around the Bay. Lee and Rene married in 2010 and remained active grandparents throughout their retirement; Lee becoming an enthusiastic soccer and dance-mom while Rene continued his lifelong love of soccer by coaching his step-grandchildren and neighbors.

Lee is survived by her grandchildren Liz and George Larsen; her great-grandson Rafe Pugliese; her stepson Mat Gautschi; and Lee's dearest friend, Nora Spicer.

# Tribute Wall



“ *She was beautiful in all ways* ”



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**Elizabeth Starr** - March 12 at 04:31 PM