

Julaine Marie Florence

May 26, 1953 - May 14, 2025

Julaine Marie Florence of Saint Louis, Missouri passed away on May 14, 2025. Born in Minot, North Dakota on May 26, 1953, she was raised in Velva alongside her four siblings in a home filled with love and joy. She graduated from Velva High School in 1971 and went on to earn Bachelor of Science (BS, 1975), Master of Health Science (MHS, 1983), and Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT, 2002) degrees from Washington University in St. Louis. Dr. Florence was a clinical researcher, with an appointment as Professor of Physical Therapy at Washington University Medical School.

A prolific researcher, Dr. Florence dedicated her career to improving treatments for children with Duchenne muscular dystrophy, a debilitating genetic disorder that causes progressive muscle weakness and degeneration, with impact on quality and span of life. She co-authored 78 publications and her work has been cited by at least 352 researchers, expanding the reach and impact of her contributions to the field. She would refer to herself as a "stubborn Norwegian," but in truth she was an unstoppable trailblazer; she was ambitious, visionary, committed, and steadfast in pursuit of her goals. She was stoic and withstood adversity with dignity.

A talented athlete in her youth, she is proudly remembered by her family for breaking down barriers and joining the Boys' Track and Field team in high school, where she excelled as a distance runner. She later ran marathons and introduced her children to a lifelong love of sports - both as athletes and as spectators. Dr. Florence cheered for her children at their various sporting events with unbridled pride and excitement. She also inspired in them the importance of caring for others and brought them into her meaningful work through participation in the Jerry Lewis MDA Telethon and MDA Summer Camp. Dr. Florence had a beautiful singing voice and her children will always remember her nightly rendition of Edelweiss before they went to sleep. She loved to read and "was funny until the very end."

Dr. Florence is preceded in death by her parents, Dr. Gerald Florence and Geraldine (Heggerston) Florence and by her brother, Dr. Jonathan Florence.

She is survived by her three loving children, Benjamin (Laura) Phillips of New York, NY, Aaron (Lai) Phillips of



Johns Creek, GA, and Hannah (Brian) Dill of Manchester, CT; six grandchildren (Rebecca, Harper, Riley, Lucas, Bodhi, and Jackson); three sisters, Kari Ann (Paul) Dunderland of Bottineau, ND, Mary Lynn (Mark) Berntson of Grand Forks, ND, and Sara Jane Anderson of Beaver Dam, WI; sister-in-law, Kristin Florence (Tom) Bodine of Velva, ND; and former spouse, Dr. Daniel (Linda) Phillips of St. Louis, MO.

A lakeside memorial will be held this summer with her loved ones at Lake Metigoshe in North Dakota, where she loved spending summers with her family.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donating in her memory to the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA; www.mda.org), a primary source of funding for neuromuscular disease research, including the very projects aimed at developing treatments for Duchenne muscular dystrophy that Dr. Florence devoted her life to.