



Julia Louise Sommer

JUL 7, 1948 - OCT 13, 2012



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SOMMER, JULIA LOUISE was born on July 7th, 1948 to George L. Williams and Margaret H. Brown Williams in Zanesville, Ohio. Margery V. Williams and Lois K. Williams were the two older sisters respectfully. Julia was the more aggressive, more focused and academically inclined of the three girls. These traits always helped her get the lead in school plays and organize her peers . Julia's wit and humor helped her see the humorous side of many situations. However, her persistent and impatient temperament were a force to be reckoned with in other situations. Julia always had empathy for the under privileged and minorities, which was evident in her career. During Julia's high school years she was a an honor student and spent one summer with a family in France. After high school she attended Cornell University in New York and earned a B.A. degree in Hotel and Restaurant Management. While attending Cornell University she met and married David Sommer whose family had a business in Peoria Illinois making grills for fast food restaurants like Hardees. Julia had a day job managing the food and maintenance personnel at one of the local hospitals. In the evening she taught classes in Hotel and Restaurant Management at Bradley University. After a few years Julia worked as the executive director for Phoenix Products and Services, a non-profit corporation, which was a quasi-public agency that obtained contracts from private business for such jobs as tearing apart old engines and rebuilding wooden pallets. These jobs were entrusted to offenders between the ages of 17 and 24 who had been convicted of crimes such as burglary and drug violations. The program only accepted those on probation who volunteered. Discipline was tough, but those who learned how to hold a job for three months were helped to find employment. The program was so novel, the magazine U.S. News & World Report published an article in the January 1979 issue explaining the program. Federal money dried up with a change in prevailing political parties in Washington, thus the program folded. Julia and her husband had gotten a divorce so



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Julia took a job in Chicago as a fundraiser for one of the major colleges. This job introduced her to many interesting and/or financially wealthy people. After working for the college for a number of years, Julia got a job as the marketing director for a large accounting firm, Friedman, Elsenstein, Roemer & Swartz, in Chicago. Julia was a juvenile diabetic from age thirteen. This condition always presented problems and limitations during her life. In April of 1991 Julia did not show up for work on a Monday. This was not like Julia. When the company got no response, they sent the police to her apartment where they found her unconscious on the floor between her bedroom and bathroom in a diabetic coma. Further investigation determined her blood sugar dropped on Friday evening. Two and a half days in a diabetic coma left her with permanent brain damage. Fortunately or unfortunately, the medical professionals kept her alive. After two and a half years in a comatic state, Julia started feeding and dressing herself. Talking, interacting with people, reading, writing and assessing her situation followed. Unpredictable behavior was common. Her Dad found a caretaker to handle her for several years. One family member saw him as a "saint", others saw him as a "gold digger". After a back operation the hospital social worker directed the family to the brain damage facility of PATE Rehabilitation where Julia resided until her death. PATE does a wonderful job of encouraging clients to function to the best of their ability considering their limitations. During the past month and a half Julia's health was declining more rapidly than usual and was in and out of the hospital several times. The lead doctor at PATE decided it was time to do some procedures to determine the cause of her rapid decline. The procedures and poor diet of only chicken and vegetables over the years was too much of Julia's frail system. Memorial service will be held at 10:30 AM on Thursday, November 1st at Spring Valley United Methodist Church, 7700 Spring Valley Rd., Dallas, TX 75254. Donations can be made in honor of Julia to: American Diabetes Association, 1701 North Beauregard St., Alexandria, VA 22311.



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