



Elizabeth Michaels Hearne

Elizabeth Michaels Hearne of Malibu, California passed away on June 25th, 2012.

Known to her friends as Liz, she was born in London, England on September 23rd, 1947, the eldest child of Leonard and Elsa Michaels, who met after Elsa escaped from Germany shortly before the start of World War II.

Liz inherited many artistic talents from her parents, as well as a drive to be creative and independent. Her father Leonard, whose family manufactured fine textiles in England, decided to go his own way and became an architect, graduating from Cambridge. Her mother Elsa (maiden name Freudenstein) was born in Frankfurt am Main in Germany to a family that manufactured costume jewelry but also produced renowned scholars in the artwork of Rembrandt and other Old Masters.

In 1950, Liz and her parents and younger brother George immigrated to the U.S. and eventually settled in San Mateo, California, where her father was particularly well known for beautiful synagogues that he designed in a mid-century modernist style.

Liz attended Burlingame High School in San Mateo and the University of Colorado in Boulder. She went on to earn an undergraduate degree from The Rudolph Schaeffer School of Design in San Francisco, where she studied design and fine art, and focused on weaving large sculptural (often three dimensional) tapestries. She supported herself through her college years by creating and selling beautiful leather apparel, and was particularly well known for her stunning handmade leather ties.

To supplement her work as an artist, Liz went on to earn a Masters of Arts in Psychology from California State University at Sonoma, and became a Marriage, Family and Child ("MFC") Counselor. Counseling then became her day job while she continued to produce beautiful weavings and other artworks at night and on weekends.

In 1974, Liz met her husband, John Hearne, a recent graduate of Stanford Law School, who at the time was a single father raising his young daughter Jennifer. They met one evening through a mutual friend, Bob Gamblin, as he was returning a frying pan that he'd borrowed from Liz. When John saw Liz, he was instantly taken by her, which he described as just like the song "Some Enchanted Evening."

A bit of time passed, and Liz and John had their first date to see Jerry Jeff Walker perform at The Great American Music Hall in San Francisco, but it was by mutual admission the worst date either one had ever had. They stayed out of touch for about a year and then tried again. This time it worked, and led to a relationship and marriage of 37 years.

In early 1977, John moved to Washington D.C. to practice law, and Liz joined him a half year after receiving her Master's degree. They were married in late 1977 and Liz started working for the State of Virginia as an MFC, serving abused women and children of dysfunctional families in poor rural areas southwest of Washington D.C.

In 1979, after the birth of her son Brendan, Liz decided that she wanted to work at home so that she could be a full time mom while still having a career. So, she merged her own experience as an artist with her exposure to architecture from her father and her exposure to fine art scholarship from her mother's family and her entrepreneurial drive to form Elizabeth Michaels Associates ("EMA") in Washington D.C.

Through EMA, Liz provided art-consulting services to advise companies, developers, real estate investment trusts, and collectors on significant artwork for lobbies, plazas and common spaces. Over the years, her company served many substantial clients, such as Bell Atlantic (now Verizon), Smith Companies, Fanny Mae and Freddy Mac. She worked with hundreds of established and emerging artists, galleries, architects, and interior designers worldwide. She was legendary in the industry for being able to find or commission all of the artwork for a new or renovated space based merely on the blue prints alone -- long before construction was even commenced -- and to achieve masterful results on-time and on-budget.

In 1983, her daughter Megan was born, and in 1987, Liz and John returned with their family to California, living in Pacific Palisades, where John was raised, and Malibu, where Brendan and Megan attended Malibu High School. She expanded EMA to Los Angeles, and John opened the Los Angeles office of his Washington D.C. law firm. They led "bi-coastal" lives thereafter, but steadily wound down the level of activity on the East Coast so as to stay fully connected with their children on the West Coast.

In 1990, John left the law firm to start his own telecommunications and media businesses, now known as the Point Enterprises Group. Ever the entrepreneur, Liz was right at his side, providing support whenever needed, and most importantly, providing a wonderful environment for their children, unaffected by the ups and downs of the businesses as they were growing.

Liz had a paperweight on her desk with the following quotation from CoCo Chanel: "A girl should be two things ... classy and fabulous." That indeed was Liz. She was a slender, gorgeous, Mediterranean complected brunette who could wear an Armani dress like a supermodel. But she was also deeply spiritual, and always sought to imbue people and places with what she called "light." She was a creator of beautiful environments, whether artistic, architectural, emotional or spiritual.

An avid gardener and animal lover, Liz rescued numerous cats and dogs, with a particular fondness for abandoned Rottweilers. She built a devoted network by being a spectacular friend, who could be relied upon for deeply engaged conversation, silly greeting cards, an open door, and an open heart.

Liz was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2008, and fiercely battled her disease with remarkable will power and dignity. She lived each day with the commitment to make it as normal as possible, but also full of happiness and hope. She used her energy to give fully to her family, who were her greatest pride and joy.

She is survived by her loving husband, John, her devoted children, Brendan, Megan, and Jennifer, and her grandchildren, Caden and Aaron. She is also survived by her mother, Elsa Michaels, brothers George and Peter, and countless loving friends.

No ordinary description can articulate how deeply she will be mourned and missed. Liz's spirit will live on in the hearts of her children, husband, and friends, as well as through the beauty she created, and the many ways she made this world a better place.