



## Ann Elizabeth (Johnson) Wild

August 31, 1942 - February 28, 2024

Ann Elizabeth Johnson Wild peacefully left this world for the next on February 28th, in Maitland, Florida.

Ann was born in Gainesville, Florida on August 31, 1942 to a college professor of recent Swedish ancestry and a college secretary of Scottish background. This odd mix of cultures manifested itself in traits such as curiosity, honesty, modesty, a love of nature, and a pale complexion.

Ann spent her childhood in Gainesville, and always considered it a home base, no matter how far she roamed. After graduating from Gainesville High School in 1960, she briefly skipped town to attend Wesleyan College in Macon, Georgia but shortly returned to Gainesville, started at the University of Florida, became president of Phi Mu sorority, and graduated with a BA in History in 1965. During her time in Gainesville, she met her husband Harry and had her first child. After his graduation, they moved up north to not-so-balmy Boston and had a second child. They eventually returned to the Sunshine State, where she lived for the rest of her life.

Family lore has it that when Harry asked permission to marry her, her father responded with a question of his own – “you do know she is hard-headed?”. Ann saw herself not as stubborn but as determined. This determination led her through several life changes.

Following her divorce in the 1970s, she applied to law school and was shocked when she was accepted. So she took her two teenaged children to St. Petersburg, where she enrolled at Stetson University College of Law. At

the age of 38, she was certainly a non-traditional student as a single mother of two and nearly a generation ahead of most of her fellow students. While it was a challenging journey, she did graduate with her J.D. in 1983.

After law school graduation, Ann returned to Gainesville and practiced Real Estate law in the law office of her brother. After a few years, she got the jones to move again and took a job with State of Florida Department of Community Affairs in Tallahassee, helping cities and counties to buy land to preserve for future generations. Not content with a single retirement, she later took a job with the Tallahassee city attorney's office. Despite her strong Gator sentiments, she happily opened her house as "Ann's B&B" to her son-in-law and his FSU friends during football weekends, never knowing how many people might be in her house on Sunday morning.

Following her second retirement, she lived happily in Tallahassee for several years. Later in life, she moved to Maitland to be closer to family. During her time in Tallahassee, she was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Eventually the effects of the disease did take a toll on her mentally and physically, but she did maintain a pleasant disposition to the end.

She led a life of empathy and service. Over the years, she was a volunteer, elder, and deacon at Christ United Presbyterian Church in Ormond Beach, First Presbyterian Church in Gainesville, and Faith Presbyterian Church in Tallahassee. [Her son can still remember the smell of mimeograph ink as she copied the weekly bulletin for church on Saturdays back in the '70s.] She volunteered as a Pink Lady at Ormond Memorial Hospital, for the PTA, and The Palmetto Club. She also "starred" in the role of Geppetto in the Daytona Beach Junior League's presentation of "Pinocchio". She was a frequent supporter of PBS, the Nature Conservancy, Habitat for Humanity, the University of Florida, and several other causes that were dear to her heart. Her children often saw her as their moral compass. Although "WWJD" made for better wrist bands, they could always consider an action through the prism of how their mom would respond. Sometimes they even heeded the right direction.

Ann was always curious. She was a lifetime learner. Beyond her 2 degrees, she also took classes in Master Gardening, and did a post-retirement semester of study abroad at Cambridge in England. She loved to read. She tried her darndest to finish the Sunday New York Times crossword each week, although to the best of our knowledge, she never did. She enjoyed playing bridge, as long as no one took it too seriously. She loved to travel, including going to Europe several times, and often traveled with a group of friends that stretched as far back as elementary school.

Ann was preceded by her father, Carl H. Johnson, and her mother, Jeannette Annin Johnson. She is survived by her brother Carl L. (Margaret) Johnson, her daughter Betsy Wild (Gary) Wilson, her son Eric (Julie) Wild, four grandchildren – Andrew (Maddie), Caroline, Wesley, and Lauren – and one great grandchild – Olivia.

There will be a private family service held later in the spring. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests a donation to the Alzheimer's Association.