



## Gail Woodward Burnham

September 7, 1937 - February 3, 2021

It is with heavy hearts, we mourn the passing of Gail W. Burnham on February 3, 2021 in Orlando, Florida. She was age 83, born on September 7, 1937 in Jonesborough Tennessee.

Gail is survived by her husband Tracy A. Burnham, her husband of 63 years; Laura Burnham & Richard Distel, Melissa Burnham Pritchard & Steve Pritchard and Sherry Burnham Boynton and Tom Boynton; and grandsons Tracy D. Burnham and Patrick B. Distel.

Gail Marie Woodward met Tab Burnham at H.B. Plant High School in Tampa, FL, where she helped him get through Calculus while he played basketball. They graduated in 1955 – he left for Colgate University and she moved to Boston and worked selling bathing suits at the Jordan Marsh department store while attending Fisher College. They got married on their shared birthday of September 7th in 1957 at the Tampa Terrace Hotel and their honeymoon was a road trip back to Colgate University. Married students were frowned upon but they made their first home in flimsy WWII temporary housing. Laura was born the beginning of senior year in 1958 and all of Tab's fraternity brothers helped as babysitters. She made it sound fun.

Gail managed 11 family moves during Tab's 38-year tenure with American Can Company starting in Rochester NY in 1959, then Fairport NY, Scottsburg

IN, Glen Ellen IL, Oak Lawn IL, Harrisburg PA, Brookfield Center CT, Liverpool England, Manchester, England, Danbury CT and Chicago IL. Along the way, daughters Melissa and Sherry arrived. She was a master at logistics.

Among her many talents, Gail was an amazing cook, Girl Scout leader; excellent bridge player; interior decorator, housekeeper extraordinaire, avid reader of several books a week and master of the toughest NY Times and London Telegraph crossword puzzles. She loved to dance and at every family event, she and Tab would jitterbug to whatever music was playing. While in Chicago, Gail volunteered at Newberry Library and later worked on gathering historic documents for both sides of the family, including the Griswold/Kimball archive that is now in the collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society. She loved to travel and went all over Europe, as well as Israel, South America, Mexico and Alaska, and would have remained living in the UK if allowed. There she became a fanatic of pubs, Liverpool football, Grand National racing, historic sites and everyday British life.

In 2017, Gail and Tab left their Gold Coast Chicago home of 28 years for the warmer climate of Orlando. They loved returning to their roots in Florida.

Gail's battle with cancer lasted almost two years. She lived a year longer than expected making this past holiday season a real gift and she got her wish to die at home.

There will be no service – family plans to gather this summer to place her ashes at the farm in Greenfield MA.

The family invites you to leave a message on the Tribute Wall created in her memory.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to Second Harvest Food Bank of

Central Florida at <http://www.feedhopenow.org> 411 Mercy Drive, Orlando, FL  
32805.

# Tribute Wall

DP

“ *She always knew just the right words to say. I will miss Gail very much.*

*Don Printz*

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**Dr. Don W Printz** - February 06, 2021 at 05:31 PM

TT

“ *Gail was always "the older cousin who visited ever so often". I remember her laugh, which she gave freely. She and Tab always seemed like "a team" and they looked very happy to be together. I share in loss that Tab, her children, her grandchildren, her relatives and her friends are feeling for this amazing woman. Being a genealogist for our family, I remember her sharing a story of when my parents got married. In 1943, when Gail would have been 7 years old, my parents married at Cleo and Red's house. Gail was allowed to play the piano for the ceremony. She joked that she was not well-tuned on playing wedding music, but everyone seemed to get a kick out of it. That was classic Gail.*

*She will be missed.*

*Her first cousin,*

*Teresa*

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**Teresa Gray Tuggle** - February 06, 2021 at 02:17 PM

JV

“ All my memories of Gail are recalled from the good times both our families enjoyed in our younger days in Connecticut; raising children, delicious meals shared, and lots and lots of laughter. The Burnham kindness and love enveloped me in a very personal way. When my husband, Bill, died they were living in England. An invitation was sent to me, in Ct., to join them on their planned vacation to Ireland. I did and was comforted just being with them. This memory picture you shared is beautiful and just the way I remember Gail.  
My deep felt condolences and love to all of you.  
Joan Vaughan

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**Joan Vaughan** - February 06, 2021 at 01:43 PM