



Marilyn Jane Zoda Gaston

February 9, 1945 - February 22, 2018

Marilyn Jane Zoda Gaston

Marilyn was born in Arlington, VA, February 9, 1945 and died in Winter Park, FL, on February 22, 2018. She was a ballerina, ballet instructor, author and animal lover.

Marilyn danced with the Ft. Worth Ballet; Casa Mañana Summer Musicals; the Atlanta Ballet Company (1972-74); the German State Theatre ballets in Lubbock and Karlsruhe (1974-77, as a fully-contracted company member); the Ballet du Rain (then in Strasbourg, France); and the Maryland Ballet (until 1979, when it was headquartered in Baltimore). Marilyn taught at universities, private dance schools and pre-professional studios. In 1981, she founded the Ballet Academy of Baltimore and the Ballet Concerto of Baltimore (now the Baltimore Ballet) until 1997. She served on the dance faculties of Towson University, Goucher College, and Loyola College (Baltimore). She graduated with a B.F.A. in Ballet/Theatre from Texas Christian University; an M.F.A. in Creative Writing from Queens University of Charlotte; and an M.F.A. in Dance on a teaching fellowship from 2009 to 2012 at the University of Oklahoma.

Marilyn also published several ballet books on her teaching techniques as well as two fiction books. She published under the name M. Z. Gaston (amazon.com).

Marilyn loved and was deeply dedicated to her students. Her past students have been accepted into many college dance programs, pre-professional schools, and into professional companies. She was a dedicated instructor at Orlando Ballet until the time of her death. She is survived by many friends and her dogs, Zoe and Snickers.

To remember Marilyn please consider a donation to Orlando Ballet, 3751 Maguire Blvd, Suite 111, Orlando, FL, 32803 or to VIP (Pet) Rescue of Central Florida, P. O. Box 940862, Maitland, FL 32794.

Tribute Wall

RN

“ Ms Marilyn found and mentored my daughter E. She taught her so much about all things ballet and the dance life. She spent time, money and talents on her. She spoke kindly to her with constructive criticisms and didn't hold back if E got it right. She gave of herself to my family. She had wonderful stories of her interesting life here and abroad. Her books are all lovely and I'm lucky to have signed copies. She was funny, brilliant, she had some funny ideas about diet-- eat mostly candy, and like to chat and discuss the news. She liked the Kentucky Derby and loved all her furry babies and talked of them often. I am sad that she died more than 3 mos ago and I didn't know. R.I.P. Marilyn. I hope you have all your fur babies and have pointe shoes that dont pinch where you are. We will remember you. Thank you for sharing your life with us.

Rhonda Nickerson - June 03, 2018 at 09:24 PM

JM

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Johan M. - March 02, 2018 at 07:02 PM

JM

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Johan Maarhuis - February 28, 2018 at 10:15 AM

JK

Beautiful Miss Marilyn.

jennifer kassner - June 16, 2020 at 02:59 PM

JM

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Johan Maarhuis - February 28, 2018 at 10:02 AM

JK

My daughter had the honor of studying ballet with Ms. Marilyn for a year and a quarter. Katie loved having a teacher who finally brought structure to her life. We were at a studio that “forced” their kids to take ballet and the attitudes and respect in the classroom reflected this. I think my daughter and a few others were the only ones that paid attention and actually couldn't wait to go to class. Marilyn convinced a studio to extend class by 30 minutes and most kids were upset and often skipped. Not my daughter. She knew that Marilyn was a gem and she hated that kids didn't show her the respect she deserved. We still carry advice that she gave us as Katie has lived on to a fulltime pre pro ballet program. Katie competed in her first ballet competition last year and it all makes sense. Hours of advice that wonderful teacher gave us are all coming to light. I only wish I could have shared Katie's first variation with her (Coppelia).

I can't believe seeing her picture here still makes me cry. I remember when she became so ill and hospitalized a few years back. She was delirious and called me at 2 in the morning. Poor thing. I was glad when she finally moved on to OBS to a real school to do what she loved. And yes, she lived her fur babies. I hope they are in good hands now. We miss you Ms. Marilyn. In ballet “Meird” to YIUR net. Uh performance beyond. ❤️❤️❤️❤️

Jennifer Kassner - July 07, 2018 at 10:38 AM

LS

“ On behalf of the staff at DeGusipe Funeral Home, please accept our condolences. It's an honor to serve your family.

Luke Spalding - February 27, 2018 at 09:33 AM



“ My daughter studied under Marilyn for 5 years. She expected her students to give their very best every day. Devin loved Marilyn and would never miss her class. Marilyn inspired her students to do their very best even when they did not feel like it. Her commitment to her craft showed in everything that she did. My family will miss her and will cherish her memory, she was an amazing Lady!

Troy Hensley - February 26, 2018 at 09:58 AM



“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



Todd DeGusipe - February 23, 2018 at 03:35 PM