



# Michelle Leigh Tompkins

May 5, 1969 - May 19, 2020

Michelle Leigh Tompkins, passed away at age 51 on Tuesday, May 19, 2020. Michelle was a devoted daughter, sister, wife, aunt, friend and animal lover. Michelle was born May 5, 1969 in Pompton Plains, New Jersey, to Edward and Susanne Diesener Feuss, both deceased. She spent her early years at Packanack Lake, Wayne, N. J., and moved with her family to Blacksburg in 1981, just in time to begin Middle School, later graduating from Blacksburg High School in 1987.

She is survived by her husband of 26 years, Gerard Patrick Tompkins.

In an intermittent, nearly 30-year career at Virginia Tech, Michelle held positions in several departments including Information Technology and Risk Management. She had a genuine way of always making everyone she worked with feel special. Colleagues will miss her bright smile and infectious laugh.

When Michelle was in grade school, her mother was diagnosed with cancer and given a 6-month prognosis. Michelle proved to be a born caregiver and optimistic companion who her mother credited with extending her life by 10 years. Ten years later, she journeyed to New Jersey repeatedly to care for her older sister, stricken with the same disease.

Michelle inherited her mother's extraordinary culinary talent, most memorably, baking delicious breads and the exquisite pastries, cakes and cookies of her German heritage. She loved cooking with friends and family, especially her sister Suzy and nephew Craig. Michelle hosted many joyous special occasion dinners which live on in indelible family remembrance. In frequent pilgrimages to upstate New York, she took great pleasure in making strawberry jam with a dearly loved friend, her mother-in-law Rita.

Michelle loved being in the great outdoors. Hiking, camping, canoeing, kayaking, rafting, riding her Harley or walking through the forest with her dogs (cats trailing behind). Raising, tending her chickens and collecting their eggs (to share) was a joyous labor of love. She loved all animals and rescued many.

Michelle, always adventurous, loved to travel, occasionally to international destinations in Europe or the Caribbean, but more often within the US. Combining family visits with exploring national parks, relaxing at the Jersey Shore, or sampling exotic cuisines in a major city, was her idea of a great vacation.

Michelle's family includes: her sister, Susanne Tirondola of Aldie, VA, brothers & sisters-in-law John (deceased) and Ruby Williams of Christiansburg, Bill and Linda Williams of Wanaque, NJ, Michael and Barbara Williams of Blacksburg; nieces and nephews, Jessica Reeves (Donn, Ringwood, NJ), Caitlin Williams (Athens, GA) Victor Tirondola (Lucia, Aldie, VA), Brian Williams (Jennifer, South Grafton, MA), Kurt Williams (Mary, Richmond, VA) Craig Williams (Washington, DC); and especially, her lifelong friend, Alene Burroughs Harris and goddaughter, Cherylanne Harris.

Michelle's family wishes to express sincere gratitude to her many friends, especially Alene Harris and Phil Benchoff, for finding new forever homes for Michelle's beloved pets: Marilyn, Sophie, Sawyer, Stu, Margaret and her entire feathered flock of hens and chicks.

To her family and many friends, Michelle was the embodiment of sunshine and mirth; extended family members embraced her as their own. Words cannot begin to express the sorrow we feel. Arrangements by McCoy Funeral Home, Blacksburg.