



Ms. Susan Lee Wilkes

May 11, 2015

Susan Lee Wilkes was born on August 16, 1965 and passed away on May 11, 2015. Daughter of Pat O'Brien and Robert Wilkes (deceased). She was three months short of turning 50. Susan really wanted to turn 50. She was a proud dyke, powerful woman, engaged citizen, loving mama and kind friend. In her five decades, Susan lived with unparalleled zest. From a young age she loved being a goalie. As recently as two years ago, she was a vibrant presence on and off the soccer field and ball hockey rink and even in the final weeks of her life, she was reading hockey stats. This passion for living fully manifested off the field, as well: A coffee on the deck at the cottage marked many happy mornings; cookies, pie and ice cream were simple pleasures, as were long conversations with good friends. These delights weren't unearned. An incredible work ethic and determination are core to who Susan was. With intelligence, integrity and hard work, Susan helped many companies chart a course towards sustainability, helping to build businesses that endured and provided stable employment for many. She took great pride in a job well done. It took a cancer diagnosis to pull her away towards more important focuses — relationships, music and laughter. These experiences in life and work allowed Susan to serve as a rock to many in her life. Susan's empathy and advice were anchor points for many in a network of loved ones that reached across North America and beyond. As a trailblazing lesbian mom in the early 1990s, she brought a unique perspective to what it means to be a mother and shared her wisdom generously. Susan was a calm and steady friend, sister, daughter,

partner and mother to many. Her advice was always smart, kind and fair. She had a great and kind mind. She was caring, loving and tough. A remarkable combination. In the last months of Susan's life, it was her turn to be cared for, after so many years of caring for others. Her wife MaryAnn took the greatest care of her as her illness became challenging. She received exceptional care at Princess Margaret Hospital and her family wishes to extend a special thanks to the staff at Kensington Hospice for their compassion and tenderness. With many children and step-children, Susan was immeasurably excited to one day meet her grandchildren and it was a source of great sadness for her in the last weeks and months of her life. It is beyond doubt that her legacy will live on as her children share her values and love for life with their own children. Before her illness, Susan purchased the grandchildren their first toy: there is a mustard-coloured stuffed rhino awaiting the first tiny hands to arrive. She will be profoundly missed by her adored wife MaryAnn; children Alex (Jennifer) and Kate (Spencer); step-children Matt, Rachael, Danny and Moriah; mother Pat, brother Rob (Sarah) and sister Nancy; many nieces and nephews; and innumerable friends. Donations can be sent in lieu of flowers to one of the following organizations: Susan Wilkes Memorial bench and tree fund <https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/a-spot-with-susan-commemorative-bench-and-tree--2/x/9079848>; Kensington Hospice: <http://www.kensingtonhealth.org/Kensington-Foundation/Ways-to-Give.aspx>; LGBT Youth Line www.youthline.ca; Right to Play <http://www.righttoplay.ca>.

A memorial will be held to honour Susan and share stories with friends and family on Sunday, June 14th at The 519 in the Grand Ballroom. 519 Church Street, Toronto from 1:30-5:00 p.m.

Tribute Wall

AC

“ I recently reached out to find Susan after 4 decades of not being in touch. Susan and I were childhood friends, consumed by playing Sports, watching Hockey Night in Canada on Saturday nights and making every variation of Bisquick known to man. I idolized Susan as a kid. I have recently decided to turn to the most important part of my life that I have neglected ... cherished friendships ... and Susan was one of the people I cherished the thought of recontacting. My search resulted in finding the most beautifully written obituary I have read. I spoke of the strength, passion, grace and love I remember. I celebrate with everybody that had a chance to share it and I hope we all share her presence going forward. I know I will. My condolences to all of the friends and family that feel the loss of such a beautiful soul.

Alex Cattelan - March 17, 2019 at 11:34 AM

KT

“ My condolences to MaryAnn, Moriah and family. The news deeply saddened me but as I look back and remember Susan, only positive memories come to mind. I remember her as a strong and fierce woman and often enjoyed conversations about sports or future life plans over dinner. I remember as I young girl when I was struggling to get comfortable with having to wear glasses, Susan showed me a humorous trick that I will never forget. She showed me with a laugh, "If someone is pissing you off, you can use your middle finger to push up your glasses". Susan will be deeply missed but the memories and life experiences everyone has learned from her will live on.

-Kim Taylor

Kim Taylor - May 16, 2015 at 09:40 PM

RV

“ Susan and I were dear friends almost immediately, bonded by a love of the written word, and a taste for quality baked goods. Hours at our local coffee house, "Tango Palace," provide cherished memories. We talked about our work, our relationships, and our dreams. We talked about music, books, and politics. We shared a common and constant search for clarity. Susan's ability to make clean order out of emotional chaos was a gift, one I called upon many times. For most of our friendship, we lived in different provinces, but she remained one of my dearest confidants over almost 20 years. MaryAnn. Susan and MaryAnn loved each other so well. To see them together, the way they cared for and about each other in the seemingly smallest of ways was truly magical in its simplicity. In MaryAnn, Susan found the woman who was meant for her. Many times in our early years together, Susan and I would talk about love. She would say: "It's no one I have met yet." Until MaryAnn. Susan was head over heels in love, and she never took finding such happiness and fulfillment for granted. MaryAnn, because of you, my dear friend was the happiest I ever saw her. I miss you, Susan. Thankfully, the way you lived and loved continues to inspire me. We'll always be connected. I am sure I am among many who feel this way, because, even though you'd probably laugh if you heard me say it, you were absolutely rare. I love you, dear friend. I'll be seeing you in all the old familiar places...

Rina Varley - May 16, 2015 at 10:35 AM

KP

“ Susan and I travelled to Peterborough together for a ball hockey tournament that Withrow's women's division entered several years ago. Susan was our goaltender. On the journey we talked about real life issues. I so appreciated Susan's candour, humour and wisdom. It was very evident she loved her family deeply. Sending tender thoughts to each one of you. She will indeed be missed.

Karen Paul

Withrow ball hockey player

Karen Paul - May 15, 2015 at 07:42 PM