



Sara L Skamser

July 16, 1956 - September 14, 2021

Sara was born to Art and June (Bastian) Witalison on July 16, 1956 in Portage, Wisconsin and died of carcinoid cancer on September 14, 2021 in Newport, OR. Sara was their fourth child, joining her older brothers Jim, John and Paul. The family spent school years in DeForest, WI where both parents were educators and her father was the principal of her grade and middle schools. They spent summers at the family homestead in beautiful Door County, WI where they worked the family's cherry orchard. She attended DeForest Public Schools graduating in 1974.

After high school she moved to Door County where she managed her parents' recently purchased grocery store, Witalison's Market in Egg Harbor. Knowing her parents would be running the store after their retirement, she chose to become a welder. She worked on the big ships in Sturgeon Bay, where she also became a Union Shop Steward. In the late 1970s she headed west to Portland, OR where she first worked as a welder on train box cars. She then worked with the Forest Service out of Mollalla and later on the tugboat "TYEE" on the Snake and Columbia rivers. Shortly thereafter she headed to the coast to join the fishing industry, originally using her welding skills to build and repair fishing vessels and then fishing.

In 1980, wanting a source of year-round income, she changed directions and joined the net-building industry. She began working with a local net company,

eventually opening a branch office for them on Kodiak Island in early 1984. It was there that she was proud to be named the Unlimited Womens' Division Arm Wrestling Champion of Kodiak Island. In August of that year she returned to Newport to open Foulweather Trawl with her future husband, John Skamser. Sara continued to run the business after John's retirement in 2009.

She took great pride in the fact that Foulweather is known for their top-quality work building, repairing, and modifying Shrimp, Drag, and Midwater gear for vessels up and down the West Coast and Alaska. Foulweather is also known for being a leader in the development of excluder nets, which promote sustainability by decreasing bycatch, thereby helping to protect the fisheries. She was recognized internationally for that work. Sara loved running the business; working with her talented and hardworking crew; working with the fishing community including collaborating with the fisheries biologists and researchers; and mixing her business experience with her love of the craft.

In addition to her professional career, Sara was also active in the community, sitting on countless committees, boards, and volunteering her time with various groups. She was a member and officer of the Newport's Fishermens' Wives where she met many good friends. Most recently she was elected to the Port of Newport Commission, something she was very proud of, and where she most recently served as President until her illness led to her resignation in 2020.

Sara was a Master Gardener, loved camping along and fishing the rivers of Oregon, and excelled at Razor clamming. Additionally, she loved arts and crafting, including knot tying; delicious foods, especially the seafood the local waters provided; fine clothing; and her 20-acres in Door County.

Sara was preceded in death by her parents, her bother Jim, her brother John & his wife Linda, and her nephew, Erik. She is survived by her husband, John

Skamser, his children, her brother Paul (Kari), her niece Erin Witalison and her nephew Skyler Witalison & his family, in addition to many good friends.

A Celebration of Life, sponsored by the Newport Fishermens' Wives organization, will be held on Nov. 6th at Foulweather Trawl in Newport, OR. More information will be available on their Facebook page.

Tribute Wall



“ *Sara L Skamser*

October 02, 2021 at 12:00 AM