

# *Norma Lang Steuerle*

*May 1, 1947 — September 11, 2001*

**“The world is like a library  
with each person a  
separate book.  
Each book contains a wondrous  
story and no two  
stories are the same.  
In my lifetime  
I wonder how many  
books I can read  
how many books  
I can open,  
and how many books  
I can love.”**

*Cover quote by Sally Hess, 1992*





## IN NORMA'S MEMORY

**S**o many wonderful people have called or written to ask if there is anything they can do. Yes, there is. Evil has taken from us our loving wife and mother, sister and daughter, aunt and niece, loved one and friend. It has also denied some of an extraordinary healer and counselor and others of financial help, as Norma and Gene were able to give away essentially one of their salaries to charities dedicated to serving those in need. We as a family are simply incapable of ever replacing even a portion of those losses. Only you can

- ☞ by telling your spouses and parents and children and friends and loved ones how much they mean to you every day of your life,
- ☞ by recommitting yourselves to dedicating your talents to doing good,
- ☞ if you happen to be blessed with some material gifts, by treating them in stewardship for others as much as yourself,
- ☞ by praying for all those who died in the four tragedies and those who lost their lives in rescue efforts.





If you wish to make an expression of sympathy, the family asks that you make it in the form of a donation to those serving others. Some suggestions: ALIVE of Alexandria, Catholic Relief Services, Save the Children Foundation, Habitat for Humanity, Amnesty International, Scholarship Fund of Alexandria or the relief efforts for the terrorist attack.

Finally, please take some of the bulbs that we have provided for everyone, and plant them in Norma's memory and in declaration of your belief in God-giving life.



## OUR THANKS TO YOU

**W**e cannot express adequately our thanks to so many people everywhere for their extraordinary expressions of love and concern. In our darkest, most fearful, moments, you have provided us with the hope to carry on. We will never forget this outpouring of support, and we keep thinking that Norma would have loved to help plan and participate in this. Of course, in more ways than we can understand, she has.

**A** special thanks also to those who have had or have planned Christian and Jewish and Muslim and ecumenical prayer services for Norma around the world.

## PLAN NOW FOR A BIG CELEBRATION

**P**lease mark your calendars now for **September 14, 2002**. On that date, approximately one year from now, we will have a BIG party in celebration of Norma's life. In the meantime, please go to the following WEB site, <http://members.home.net/steuerle> and there you will find instructions on how to send us some personal memory of Norma that you would like to share with the rest of us. We will gather them together and share "The Book of Norma" on that day of celebration.



# Norma Steuerle

*Died in a terrorist attack, September 11, 2001 at age 54*



Norma was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the oldest of three daughters to Norman and Helen Lang. An energetic and curious baby, Norma loved from the very beginning to discover the world around her. A poster child for the qualities of first born, Norma eagerly assumed the role of big sister to Janice and Christine. Immediately upon forming the sisters only “NJC” club Norma announced herself as President. Fund raising would commence immediately with fines for not attending to proper neatness,

10 cents for not making your bed, 5 cents for not folding your towels. This take charge attitude served her well as a high achieving girl scout and active participant in high school affairs including the editorship of St. Basil’s newspaper, membership on the debate team, and leadership on student council.



Academically Norma was a straight-A student and learned under the tutelage of her aunt, Sister Rosaria, a tough and respected teacher who taught Norma math and physics as well as made sure that she held to the rules even more than the other students.

She initially attended college at Dayton, where she met Gene. Give him credit for persistence. After dating him a little she left Dayton to be closer to another guy and to attend Carnegie-Mellon. There she graduated at the top of her class in psychology and met Claudia Wolfe who became a lifelong friend and “sister.”



Norma next moved to pursue her Masters in psychology at Temple University while waiting for Gene (realizing the error of her ways) to return from Vietnam. In 1970, Norma and Gene celebrated their love for one another and married at St. Valentine’s Church in Bethel Park. Early 1971



Gene and Norma moved to Madison, Wisconsin where Norma literally talked her way into the Psychology Department in mid-year. Their first day there found Norma in a mini-skirt and no heavy coat. Norma met that challenge as well as surviving some of the quirks of her department such as a first social invitation that turned out to be for a pot party and a professor who believed in menage-a-trois.

With her indomitable spirit Norma managed once again to impress everyone and finished

within four years earning her Ph.D. in social psychology. At the same time, Norma and Gene's first child, Kristin, entered the world in April, 1973 – having kicked enough in the womb to earn her the title “Little Chester Marcol” (the field kicker for Packers at the time).



Norma's passion, however, was always clinical practice. In 1974, largely due to an offer of an internship at

*The best reason to be happy is for no reason at all*

*Sally Hess, 1998*

Children's Hospital in

Washington, she and Gene and Kristin moved and settled in Alexandria, where they discovered a community they loved. Norma and Gene's second child, Lynne arrived in 1977, and she and Kristin were fortunate enough to

have Norma's parents share their guiding hand and abiding love for five years.

Norma did a residency at Mt. Vernon Community Mental Health Center, soon followed by establishing herself in private practice, yet not without once again battling the bureaucracy.

Virginia doctors wanted to say that a course in Psychology of Children in Madison wasn't the same as a course in Child Psychology in the great

state of Virginia. Norma persevered and secured the necessary certification.



Norma always rebelled against the tyranny of bureaucracy and preferred to work in small groups – in a relationship of strong mutual trust and often with a single partner and dear friend like Kathy Basham or Susan Biggs. Norma loved her work, combining deep concern for her patients with some very common sense wisdom and a great sense of balance, conveying a



deep spiritual notion about what is important in life. Her dedication, skill and competence were evidenced by the number of those who sought her out.

Norma's family life flourished and grew. She came to be a beloved sister, aunt, niece, and cousin of Gene's

family which includes his two sisters Jackie and Jeannette as well as cousins Martin and Nancy and all of their own extended families. Her friend Claudia's family was so close that the children often called Norma aunt and often sought her advice. A son was added when Jeyan Heper joined the family for a year as a student from Turkey and he and Norma formed a special bond. Jeyan's family in Turkey – parents, Fethi and Melekper, and sister Dayla – and the Steuerles reached across a continent to develop a special attachment through mutual visits.

Norma's own personal search for spiritual meaning was to find great support through counselors such as Rhoda



Nary and Joan Hickey from Shalem and dear and lifelong friends whom Norma and Gene met at their church. One group began meeting monthly over twenty years ago and has never stopped since. The group's combined spiritual efforts have had a profound impact discovered through such quests for understanding as Bible Pictionary and their own version of the Super Bowl Shuffle.



Norma's deepest feelings and spiritual longings focused on the dignity and value of each person and the inherent sacred priesthood of all people. She couldn't abide structures and rules that excluded others from a common communion and equal partnership in life's journey.



Norma's life was not without deep wounds, perhaps the greatest of which was the death of her sister Janice in 1998. Gene could also be a trial, but she was absolutely and totally committed to him for over thirty years of marriage. He could exasperate her, forgetting where he put things, analyzing things 100 times but she always came through for him. In these and many other areas, he is in BEEG trouble now.

Norma's amazing zest and energy for life – even in her 50's challenged those around her. Norma often walked at a pace that required the rest of her family, including two daughters who



lettered in three sports a year, to run to catch up. She loved to travel and spend time at the beach, and faithfully attended the kids' school activities and



sports events. One small grace is that she died after spending a wonderful time with family and friends at

Bethany Beach, Delaware, and was headed on to the Far East to fulfill a lifetime dream of visiting Thailand. She was to join Gene on business in

Singapore and Kristin, a Navy doctor stationed in Okinawa.

Norma loved to read, and you didn't dare interrupt her when *Mystery* was on the boob tube. Traditions, such as stopping by Park-and-Dine in Hancock on the way west, or buying a Christmas tree, or cooking certain

foods such as Chocolate Angel

***Your Worth is  
invaluable. Your  
believing it is  
priceless.***

Pie at Thanksgiving or Lemon Chicken, gave her joy and a connection to others. She loved to go out to eat and to browse in stores.

*Sally Hess, 1998* Norma's taste in movies was not hard to understand: the characters had to be good, and once she decided she didn't like someone like Woody Allen, that was that.

Norma preferred volunteering when it went



directly toward getting something done, such as working with a former welfare recipient to get a new start in the job market. She had little patience for committee meetings. Nonetheless, as chair of the Blessed Sacrament Early Childhood Center or co-chair of Titan Expo for T.C. Williams High School, she had no problem delegating to get things done. Of course, you know that it was only an accident that right after introducing a raffle for the Childhood Center, she and Gene proceeded two years in a row to win first and third prize. She was young beyond her years, always being accused of being ten or twenty years younger than she was. While not appreciating these accolades in her 20s, she soon repented. Gene used to drive her crazy by constantly mentioning that in 2002 she would be eligible for 55+ old-age discounts. She claimed that she would never use them, and, God help us, she was right.

Among her latest energetic thrusts were to drive around in her Miata with the top down and to decorate her new house beautifully for all those who could come by (OK, the downstairs bathroom is painted bordello red, but that was the result of Norma's attempt to share decision-making on aesthetic matters with Gene). A wonderful addition in the last two years was helping to host a Seder dinner in the large family room in her



new home. She loved the flowers and azaleas that Gene planted and often would buy more flowers for the inside.

Most of all, she loved her family, and nothing excited her more than to visit or be visited by her children or her sister or her parents or other adopted members of the family such as Fred Snowden. A kind note or call from Gene or Kristin or Lynne could make her day. For newcomers to the family, introduction always meant going through the gauntlet of learning to play double- and triple-deck Pinochle, Five Hundred, a Solitaire contest (the family's version of an oxymoron), or at least a game of Sorry, where no one was really very sorry for knocking the stuffings out of their opponents.

She simply was one fabulous lady, the greatest of wives and mothers, the most caring of friends, and the wisest of counselors. We miss you so, so much, Norma. God help us.



*Janice, Mom, Christine, Dad and Norma*



*Fred, Gene, Lynne, Norma, Dad & Tim at Bethany Beach*



*Kristin, Christine, Norma and Lynne*



*Norma*



*Norma and Gene*



*Christine and Norma*



*Kristin, Lynne and Norma*

*When I despair I remember  
that all through history the way of  
truth and love has always won. There  
have been murderers and tyrants, and  
for a time they can seem invincible.  
But in the end they always fall.  
Think of this always.*

*— Mahatma Gandhi*