

Obituary: Portia “Polly” Helena Adams Brown ’63 (Nov. 28, 1945 - Sept. 8, 2023)

Portia Helena Adams was born November 28, 1945 in Kansas City, Missouri, to Dr. Robert D. W. Adams and Helen (Mills) Adams. She was an only child with two adult half-siblings, Dana Adams and Atalie Adams O’Brien. Her family enjoyed music and academics. She joined Second Presbyterian Church when she was fifteen and she graduated from Sunset Hill School in 1963.

Portia earned a bachelor's degree in German from Oberlin College in 1967 and a master's degree in linguistics at Michigan State University in 1969. She intended to teach English overseas but met David in her first year of graduate school. They married a year later, at University Reformed Church, East Lansing in 1968. She and David were married for 55 years.

In 1971 their daughter, Elisabeth, was born. They moved from Michigan to California in 1971, first to Santa Barbara, and then to San Diego, where they would stay for the next 50 years. Their son, Matthew, was born in 1976. While taking care of the children, Portia continued to pursue languages, music, and her global vision. She worked as an ESL teacher and an EF international student exchange program director. She also worked for and volunteered with Alliance for African Assistance in San Diego for 16 years, using her linguistic skills to welcome each new group of refugees.

Portia loved classical music, singing hymns, studying the Bible, watching Jeopardy, playing games with her family, and traveling. Speaking five languages helped on her world travels to Mexico, Canada, Australia, Norway, Austria, Switzerland, France, Italy, and the United Kingdom.

Portia died from Progressive Supranuclear Palsy (PSP) on September 8, 2023. She is survived by her husband, David H. Brown; daughter Elisabeth J. Brown Hendricks and her husband, Bill; son Matthew D. Brown and his wife, Coralie; and four grandchildren, Jonathan A. Hendricks, Aaron L. Hendricks, Rayya A. Perrott Brown, and Eben M. Perrott Brown.

In lieu of flowers the family requests donations be made to either the Alliance for African Assistance or CurePSP which raises funds for research into Progressive Supranuclear Palsy, an extremely rare neurodegenerative disease.

Condolences can be sent to the family via email or snail mail as follows:

Email: polydavid@sbcglobal.net

Snail Mail:

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