



## Paula E. Murphy

June 11, 1958 - January 16, 2018

WESTHAMPTON-Paula Elizabeth Murphy, 59, died on January 16 after a year-long struggle with appendiceal cancer. Explorer of inner and outer landscapes, connoisseur of beauty, artist, healer, teacher, and guide-Paula cast a bright light on this world. Paula used to say that we choose the family we are born into to help us do the work we need to do in this lifetime. On June 11, 1958, Paula chose to be the first child born to Marion and Michael Murphy in Highwycombe, England. She immigrated with them and her two siblings, Suzanne and Stephen, to the United States (Boston) in 1961. Two more siblings, John and Sandra, soon arrived stateside. After attending Franklin and Marshall College, Paula earned her master's degree in social work and began working at St. Peter's Hospice in Albany, NY. It was there that she met Deborah Burkhalter, her beloved partner for 31 years, and where her path turned toward accompanying those with terminal illness and their loved ones through dying, death, and bereavement. Paula moved to the Northampton area in 1992, and rooted deeply in this community. In addition to her private practice in psychotherapy and massage, she affiliated with a number of community organizations, including Hospice of Hampshire County, Cooley Dickinson VNA & Hospice, Cancer Connection, Mass General Cancer Center at Cooley Dickinson Hospital, Smith College School for Social Work, and A Positive Place. She led workshops in palliative and end-of-life care for healthcare providers in Belgium, France, and Ireland. Paula was a mentor to many in the field of end-of-life care, both as a professional and in her own

experience with cancer. Paula knew beauty intimately. It flowed from her into her garden, the art she created, the details of her home, the fabrics she wore, the foods she prepared. She savored textures, colors, patterns, and light, and she could reveal the extraordinary in the seemingly ordinary with the touch of her hand. Her generosity, compassion, kindness, and wisdom graced all of us fortunate enough to have known her. Paula was a beloved partner, sister, daughter, aunt, godmother, and friend. She is survived by her wife Deborah Burkhalter; parents Marion and Michael; sister Suzanne and husband Steven Seminer; brother Stephen and wife Kathy; brother John and wife Lisa; sister Sandra; nieces, nephews, and grandnephew; godson Ezra Ginzberg and his parents Lisa Harvey and Jonathan Ginzberg; and her cherished community of friends. We miss her so very much. She was deeply grateful to the compassionate, wise, loving caregivers at Cooley Dickinson VNA & Hospice, Mass General Cancer Center at Cooley Dickinson Hospital, and Mass General Hospital in Boston, who accompanied her from the moment of diagnosis through the end of her life. A celebration of Paula's life will be held at a future date. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Cooley Dickinson VNA & Hospice (168 Industrial Drive Northampton, MA 01060), Cancer Connection (41 Locust Street, Northampton, MA 01060), or Kestral Land Trust (PO Box 1016, Amherst MA 01004).

New England Funeral & Cremation Center, LLC, 25 Mill Street, Springfield, MA 01108 has been entrusted with the arrangements. Please visit [www.nefcc.net](http://www.nefcc.net)