



## Geraldine Beth Willoughby

August 18, 1939 - July 2, 2021

Geraldine (Geri) Beth Willoughby, age 81, died July 2, 2021 at home with her family. She was born August 18, 1939 in San Luis Obispo, California to Seth and Theo Kinney. She married Bertram Charles Willoughby on July 20, 1958 at First Presbyterian Church in Santa Barbara.

As a young mom, Geri's world was turned upside down by studying the Bible at Bible Study Fellowship (BSF). There, her faith in Jesus flourished. Her life was grounded with hope and purpose. Eventually passing it along in her role as a BSF discussion leader. Both her faith and tenacious spirit were nurtured and guided by Bert's Grandmother, Elizabeth Kelly. Geri opened her home to many.

She spent decades investing in both her "bio" children and over 20 foster children. She drove these children to school, church and other activities. She visited Yosemite annually, lead youth trips to the Sierras and drove across America. She preferred driving so her children could experience history and come to know America. She had a heart for the vulnerable, especially children, shut-ins and the disabled. She obtained a commercial driver's license so she could drive teenagers to youth camps and the elderly and disabled to church. She headed the van ministry at 1st Presbyterian Church for over 45 years.

She cooked countless meals for junior and senior high students both at church and during backpacking trips she organized. Her backyard, dubbed, "Willoughby World" was opened as a playground for Salvation Army Kids,

church kids and individuals in need of rest or fun. She delighted in providing opportunities for, “kids to be kids” and for them to enjoy life’s simple pleasures. The kids at Willoughby World enjoyed playing with big dogs, swimming, going down a 16-foot water slide, and eating snow cones, cotton candy, hot dogs and popcorn. For some this was an escape from the pains of a difficult childhood. She loved to create beauty through sewing and crafting. She leaves behind a home that has been well lived in, children she is proud of and a spiritual legacy of changed lives. She touched so many.

She is survived by her husband, Bert Willoughby, children Bret Willoughby (Nancy), Bart Willoughby, Brenda Lilly (Glen), Sheila Henne (Rod), Shannon Williams (Richard), Joanie Lawson (Craig) Adrian Romero (Barbara) Ingrid Rivas (Fred), 13 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her parents, her mother-in-law, father in-law, her sisters, and sister-in-law.

A memorial service will be held July 31, 2021 at 1 pm at First Presbyterian Church Santa Barbara 21 E. Constance, Santa Barbara. Flowers may be sent to the church. Donations may be given to Salvation Army Camp Scholarship for needy children in Santa Barbara County. <https://give-cas.salvationarmy.org/give/349426/#!/donation/checkout>

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

JUL 31. 1:00 PM (PT)

First Presbyterian Church  
21 E. Constance Ave.  
Santa Barbara, CA 93105  
<http://www.fpcsb.org>

# Tribute Wall

DB

“ Thank you, Geri, for allowing me to be a part of your life!  
I write this with tears in my eyes because the Geri I know is powerful and persistent. I never won any battle against her. I met Geri while she was still doing reconstruction of Willoughby's World after the mudslide. She welcomes me into her home and showed me pieces of her enormous and well-lived life. I will never forget how she casually cleaned off spider webs from the outside chairs so I could sit. I was afraid of the spiders and Geri sure wasn't. Everything changed so fast but I am so happy she is resting in peace now. She is definitely top of the list of people who deserve that.

*Rest in well deserved Paradise!*

*-Deanna Becerra  
Visiting Angels*

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**Deanna Becerra** - August 02, 2021 at 05:02 PM

CB

“ ... and Willoughby World!! A place that holds dear fun sweet memories in our hearts. Thank you.

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**Cherise Beard** - July 31, 2021 at 04:07 PM

CB

“ Geri, thank you for welcoming us to first pres. Thank you for the stuffed teddy bear that Mackenzie (now 11years old) still sleeps with every night. Thank you for your love, hospitality and warmth. We will miss seeing your smiling face every Sunday.

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**Cherise Beard** - July 31, 2021 at 04:06 PM



“ *Geri, you were special and Exemplary! What a kind, warm and giving spirit you shared with all of us! You and Bert have impacted so many lives. You loved our family so well, especially Fabrice as your own. Your doors were always open, your smile always welcoming, and your infectious joy always radiates onto others. Well done Geri! You were loved and will be missed*❤️

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**Nathalie Dagbovie** - July 30, 2021 at 03:34 PM



“ *Thank you so much for all the love, care and attention you shared. Few people have been more generous. You are loved and missed.*

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**Joanie Calles Lawson** - July 30, 2021 at 02:54 PM



“ *We are so blessed to have had Geri in our lives. Many, many fond memories of Willoughby World 🍷 and the wisdom of the Willoughby's. We wish we could be there but our thoughts, prayers and blessings will be there for the Willoughby family.*

*Sue & Gene Schaefer*

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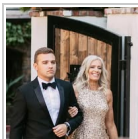
**Sue C Schaefer** - July 29, 2021 at 03:21 AM

SM

*“ I met Geri soon after I joined the church and staff in the late 80s. While I was church business admin. I worked closely with Geri and relied in her for our van ministry and help with the vans. She was always reliable and knew all the answers to my many questions. She was one of the kindest people I have known and I cant imagine First Pres. without her. What a blessing she was to everyone fortunate to know her. I wish I could be there for the service on Saturday, but Anacortes, WA is too far away. My love to Bert and the family.  
Sharon McBean*

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**Sharon McBean** - July 28, 2021 at 11:29 PM



*“ I am so sad to hear this. What a wonderful woman! Her obituary is a beautiful tribute to who she was and how much joy she brought to others. My memory of Geri is that she was always pleasant, kind, and smiling whenever I saw her. If only everyone could be so the world would be a much better place. I thought of her often while working at BPW because “GERRI” was the password for a particular project I worked on frequently. I am sorry to miss her service as I will be out of town. My condolences to you all. Having lost my mother last year, I can relate to this huge loss.*

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**Elizabeth Boscacci** - July 25, 2021 at 02:45 PM

BR

*“ Mom I'll miss you! I will try to remember all the lessons that you and Dad taught me.*

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**Bret** - July 24, 2021 at 01:48 PM