



## Pamela Louise Strawn

June 27, 1953 - December 26, 2020

Pamela Louise Strawn died December 26, 2020, at home surrounded by her family that she loved so dearly. Pam was born June 27, 1953, in Port Clinton, Ohio, to Richard and Mary Lou Semon. She was the second of four children.

If you knew Pam, you knew one thing for certain -- her sole purpose in life was to serve God by serving others. Sharing the love of Jesus was her only mission, and she carried out that mission tirelessly.

Pam grew up attending St Thomas' Episcopal Church in Port Clinton, where she sang alto in the children's choir. Pam loved to sing, and she was good at it. In fact, she had many artistic talents that blossomed from her childhood experiences. She learned to arrange flowers while working at her grandparents' greenhouse during busy holiday seasons; she was organized and detail-oriented and used those skills to help with cleaning and to care for her aging relatives; she learned to sew in Home-Ec, which eventually led her to apply to Fashion Institute of Technology in Manhattan. She was accepted and earned an associate's degree in fashion design. Pam spent many months on Nantucket Island, where she modeled clothes she helped produce, learned from an esteemed chef, and served as a cook for a local family. After completing her degree, she returned to Ohio.

In 1975, Pam and her best friend of many years, loaded a car with their

belongings and headed west, intending to visit a friend in Colorado and look for work there. When they arrived, their friend was gone. Sitting on a sidewalk debating their options, Pam said, "In junior high I saw a picture of Oregon, and there are a lot of trees there." Despite some hesitation over the distance to Oregon, the two friends made their way to the West Coast and eventually settled on an apartment in Corvallis. And soon, on the advice of an acquaintance back in Ohio, Pam picked up a copy of an NIV New Testament and visited a Church of Christ. When she attended what is now Circle Church of Christ, she was impressed, if not a little taken aback, when the campus minister and his wife invited her to their home for lunch on her first Sunday. She quickly integrated into the campus ministry and was baptized that summer. Just a few months later, Pam started dating Gregg Strawn; the two had met through the church college ministry, and they married in Corvallis's Central Park May 11, 1979. That was the beginning of a long and fruitful partnership in ministry and in life.

Their marriage of more than 41 years was marked by faithful commitment to each other as they learned and grew together. They loved to see the world together -- whether faraway places like China, Israel and Europe, or places closer to home like National parks and local hikes. Their friendship and love for each other inspires many.

Before settling in Corvallis, the two spent a year in Denton, Texas. Gregg completed a degree in music, and Pam filled several administrative roles at a local pharmacy. While she is known for her servant heart, she is equally known for her get-it-done attitude. Even then the pharmacy owner wrote a glowing letter of recommendation and marked the envelope, "Boss Lady."

Together Pam and Gregg returned to Corvallis and served with Circle Church of Christ for 38 years -- beginning in campus ministry in 1981 until the church hired Gregg as Minister of the Word a few years later. Pam was uniquely

suiting for the role of "preacher's wife" and took on any and every task that needed done. If she saw a need, she took care of it. And much like her home, the church building is marked by her unique style, creativity, hard work, and many, many notes in her distinct handwriting. She hosted meals for countless people from many corners of the world, following the example of others from those early college days. Pam especially loved serving international students and their families, and teaching the cradle roll and toddler Bible classes, considering it an honor to shape little hearts with the foundational truths of God's love.

In addition to her roles in ministry, Pam cleaned houses part time for nearly three decades. It was another ministry, in a way. Her clients considered her a friend and trusted confidant rather than an employee. She was always serving, always caring for people, always putting the needs of others ahead of her own -- even in her professional life, armed with her blue canvas tote and yellow rubber gloves.

While Pam's accomplishments are many, none brought her more joy than raising two children to love and serve God, a son, Jordan, and daughter, Marissa. She delighted in them, as babies and through their growing up years into adulthood. And her joy increased when she became a grandma, times eight -- a role she had looked forward to since her own childhood. She relished every minute with her grandkids, capturing pictures and sharing stories, encouraging their curiosity and unique personalities, and showering them with love and praise and adoration. None of them ever questioned their place with Grandma/Gammie: always cherished.

Pam enjoyed many travels in her life, both domestic and international, but her happiest place was at home digging in the dirt. She was a talented flower gardener, and many of her loved ones have plants that started in Pam's

garden. Purple lilacs and honeysuckle were her favorites. She delighted in sunsets, beautiful full moons, and walks with Gregg.

After being diagnosed with a degenerative neurological condition in November, Pam's health declined quickly. But she maintained her pleasant demeanor, love of her grandchildren (especially the two newest babies, born in 2020), all the words to children's Bible songs, and the alto parts to favorite Christmas carols. She will be missed greatly and remembered fondly by her many friends and family.

Pam is preceded in death by her parents, brother Doug Semon, and granddaughter Abigail Strawn. She is survived by her beloved husband W. Gregg Strawn of Corvallis, Ore.; son Jordan (Kellie) Strawn of Albany, Ore.; daughter Marissa (Aaron) Veik of Keizer, Ore.; and grandchildren Tirhas, Kiflom, Everett and Ferne Strawn, and Kara, Eva and Adriana Veik, as well as her sister Janet Semon Fedor of Jupiter, Fla., and brother Scott Semon of Concord, Calif.

Gifts in memory of Pam can be made to the Pam Strawn Memorial Fund at Circle Church of Christ in Corvallis, Ore., which will be given to Christian Relief Fund to drill a well in drought-stricken Kenya, in Pam's name.

# Tribute Wall

PE

“ Greg, Jordan, Marissa, and all our family,

*Stu and I were so saddened when we opened up the GT on Thursday morning, January 28, and saw Pam's obituary. Pam was always such a vital presence in people's lives.*

*We knew Pam though our children. What a blessing it is when your children choose good friends! Although my conversations with Pam were few in quantity, they were always rich in love, caring, and wisdom. I remember Pam's smile, her way of immediately putting people at ease, her gift of being truly present with all whom she met. I remember laughing together as two mothers, sharing stories of family.*

*Pam's deep faith in God showed in her smile and in her caring for others. She knew how to listen and to inspire a trust that drew people to her--that drew me to her.*

*Our family is holding each one of you close in our hearts and in our prayers.*

*Stu and Patricia Eide*

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**Patricia Eide** - February 05, 2021 at 12:52 PM

MB

“ Pam was a good, good friend growing up in Port Clinton and at St. Thomas Church. She was born 8 days before me so we had been talking and sharing stories from an early age. I remember skipping out of school to go swimming at the quarry as we were about to graduate from PCHS. I remember that in my second year of college in Virginia, my college roommate invited me to his New Jersey home for Thanksgiving or maybe Easter. I went across a river on a short trip on a bus to New York and ran around the subway stations as Pam showed me some of the sights. I lost touch with Pam, but thanks to a friend in Port Clinton I read her obituary this morning. I returned from school and spent 20 years working in PC, started a second career at seminary in Chicago and have ended up a retired hospital chaplain in Wisconsin. Pam has been a blessing in my life!

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**Mark Belknap** - February 01, 2021 at 03:10 PM

LB

“ Ever since our son was born 19 years ago, our neighbors Pam and Gregg have made it clear that if I ever needed anything, they were there. What I will remember most about Pam is that she never pretended she was something that she wasn't. When I said hi walking around the circle and she happened to be frazzled, she said so. Christian humility. We are so very sorry for Gregg and their family. Laurie and Jed Irvine

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**Laurie Barshay** - January 29, 2021 at 05:45 PM

AL

“ I am missing Pam! Although we did not know each other well, I enjoyed talking with her on my walks around the circle. Take care. Our thoughts are with you. ❤️

Anne Loewen

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**Anne Loewen** - January 29, 2021 at 03:45 PM

CE

“ *Strawn Family --*

*I just saw the news of Pam's passing from the obituary in the GT. I am shocked and just so sad for this loss. I will always remember her as a kind and positive presence in every situation, with a great sense of humor but an even greater patience for the sarcastic wit running rampant in her household. Between band-related things or never-ending "TITAN I.C." production or just as a friend hanging out, I spent a good chunk of high school at your family's home. Though I am sure listening to Jordan and I converse almost exclusively in a mix of SNL sketch quotes, obscure movie and literary references, and groaner puns may have induced a bit of eye rolling, I will say that Pam always made me feel welcome and valued in your home. Whether or not she knew it, in so doing she was allowing me to build one of the most important friendships of my life with her son. So, I just want to let you know my life is better because of her and your family. Know also that you are surrounded by love and prayers during this hard time.*

*Chris Eide*

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**Chris Eide** - January 28, 2021 at 04:04 PM

SC

“ *Gregg, I was sorry to read this news about your wife in the GT. It's impossible to know why God sometimes takes the ones we love so early, but I trust that He will continue to lead you and strengthen you and provide for you as you continue your ministry. Stuart Conrad.*

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**Stuart Conrad** - January 28, 2021 at 11:04 AM