



Meredith Louise Wotman

November 14, 1939 - May 20, 2026

Meredith Louise Wotman nee Johns, the oldest of five, was born at Lewis Memorial Hospital in Chicago on November 14, 1939, to Ralph and Esther Johns.

The apocryphal Johns story has Ralph wanting to stay in Paris after VE Day. Esther, because of Meredith, was forcefully having none of that. Meredith would remain similarly persuasive for the rest of her life but her techniques, grace, tact and kindness, varied from those of her mother.

Meredith stood out, tall for her age, whip-smart too. She graduated from Schultz High School in Terre Haute, IN in 1956 and from her beloved St. Mary of the Woods at 1960 in math. Though it was not always easy for her as an exception, she loved school. You'll find this to be a theme, this love that encompassed and transcended.

As a young woman, she travelled to Europe, she skied in the West, she saw northern Michigan. She made great, lifelong friends. She taught in Indianapolis and Chicago. She loved her parents and her siblings, older than them by a bit, acting as a guiding light, a sun.

Then Sid Wotman. They met at a school in Chicago Ridge. Older, dapper, the Californian extrovert compliment to her watch-and-wait. There's a picture from

their wedding in 1968 where they absolutely beam, radiate, two suns. A devout Catholic, she married a divorced man outside her faith who had a son, Larry, because that's what you do if it is right.

They loved their life in Chicago. Then Jonathan in 1972 and Kathryn in 1975 and the supposed life-long renters were persuaded to buy a friend's townhouse in Vernon Hills. There were dogs, a deck, many days at the pool, so many friends, so much of everything you'd want really, and a job teaching 7th grade math at Hawthorn only a couple blocks away.

Meredith founded a morning program to help kids who struggled with their homework and quickly realized the students were hungry so she made it a program with breakfast. Because that is how love and concern dictate it should be.

Bridge nights, Thanksgivings, Hilton Head, picking tomatoes in Ralph's garden in Oak Lawn, car trips around the country, and the lovely weddings of her siblings.

When Jon and Kath leave the house, they retire and see the Baltic, the Rhine, St. Petersburg, Austria, ocean after ocean. She eventually stops smoking Carltons on the porch.

Every niece and nephew, every spouse, every grandchild, every friend who walked through that townhouse door felt what she'd done, felt welcomed to join Meredith there where it was better. For a few hours, better.

To take care of themselves as they aged, Meredith and Sid moved to Mundelein, then Evanston and then Ft. Collins, CO to be close to Kath. There was a view of the mountains from her window, the Snowy Range close by, and cupcakes from Wyoming. (In a very rare unkind word, she decried baking at

altitude.)

Sid died in 2024. It is difficult to think of her nights alone. But you can also imagine her turning her light upon herself, and days building gradually behind her, better.

Meredith battled heart issues for many years. Her doctors and caretakers adored her, helping to sustain her past what medicine predicted. Quietly, with love, she was a disciplined warrior, taking care, making the right decision, ensuring that her people had a chance to say goodbye.

Though when you encompass and transcend, there is no goodbye. There is only what you created in those you loved and who loved you.

Meredith Wotman died on May 20, 2026. She is treasured always by Larry, Jon and Kath, her favorite children (her in-laws) Keith Mickelsen and Meredith Dodd, her grandchildren Noah

and Andrew, her sisters Adrienne and Maggie and by so many others who knew and loved her.

In lieu of flowers, please remember Meredith at Pathways, the hospice that cared so well for both Sidney and her: <https://pathways-care.org/give-now>
Or

Support a cause close to Meredith and Kath's heart, donate to the Equine Cancer Research Fund at CSU to help fight cancer in horses and people: <https://col.st/dwkvv>