



Rita S. Thornton

August 22, 1940 - October 1, 2023

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Rita was born in 1940 to parents Thelma and Homer Ray in Danville, Illinois. She moved to Boulder, Colorado in 1972. She is survived by her loving husband, Gary Thornton, daughter, Karmen of Tucson, AZ, and granddaughter Ashleigh of Arvada, CO. Please join us in celebrating Rita's life on October 21, 2023 from 2pm – 5pm at Rita and Gary's home: 5400 Jonathan Ct., Fort Collins, CO. Friends and Family are welcome to attend and share in their memories of Rita. She will be greatly missed!

“Creativity is intelligence having fun” Albert Einstein

This quote epitomizes the life of Rita and her husband, Gary, who were blessed to spend fifty wonderful years together. Entering their home in Applewood, artistic wonders leap from the walls of their studio and gallery. Evidence of their love-filled collaboration, Rita's framed works and Gary's photography, portray their intellectual aptitude and years spent in joyous creativity. The pair worked together, Rita creating compositions with transparent watercolor, acrylic, pen and ink, or pencil, Gary photographing animals and plants during their travels in Tanzania, Kenya and India. Wandering from room to room, a visitor gazes into the eyes of tigers,

leopards, elephants, giraffes, zebras, birds—and even tribal members from the Maasai and Samburu tribes in Kenya. The eyes stare back with such realism, one senses their desire to tell their story, and indeed each picture has its own story. Rita's work reveals the millions of brush strokes she deftly applied to complete so many brilliant masterpieces. Primarily self-taught, Rita began painting in the mid-1980s and continued her work until the last days of her life.

Gary's photographs, nestled among Rita's stunning pieces, validate the careful eye they used in searching nature and the exquisite creatures of our world. Balance, lighting, texture, color, repetition, and remarkable composition show through each painting and photograph, whether it is a garden setting, a family of leopards, a watering hole of zebras or a bevy of awkward-looking giraffes.

Rita has been featured locally and nationally in many galleries and exhibitions. Additionally, Rita held Signature Membership in the American Watercolor Society and the National Watercolor Society and Juried Associate Membership in the Society of Animal Artists.

Those who wish to see their work may do so at www.ritathornton.com and www.garythornton.com.