



Karen Dawn Mercer

SEP 6, 1967 - FEB 9, 2018



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If you had paint and needed it put somewhere, Karen Mercer was the woman for you. Children's faces, model's bodies, stretched canvases, storefront windows and even the occasional ruminant skull, she transformed them all into works of art with a verve and spark that matched her zest for life.

Karen was a fiercely proud Californian – politically, socially, temperamentally and climatologically :) She was born in the San Francisco Bay Area and was one with it to the core of her being. She despised Florida the instant she moved here in 2010, hating the humidity and the bugs and the politics, if not of Tallahassee then at least of the South in general.

But little by little she grew to love many of the people that she met, and they her. She found a core group of kindred spirits amongst the mothers at the School of Arts and Sciences and they sustained and nourished her spirit. She also discovered that SAS itself was a better match for her sensibilities than any of the schools her kids attended in California and she was deeply grateful to those who created and propelled it.

FairyDust Faces, the face painting business that she created in California, survived the cross country trip and flourished in the hothouse climate of North Florida, albeit with seasons reversed. No one gets facepainted in Tallahassee in summer, so spring and fall became her busy seasons. She came to be a beloved regular at many annual area events: Springtime Tallahassee, Art in the Park, Word of South, Pride Festival, SouthWood Pops, July 4 at Tom Brown Park, True Seminole Tailgate, Downtown and Uptown Getdowns, Havana Pumpkin Festival, Asian Festival, North Florida Fair, Mule Day, Winterfest, Bradley Country Day along with weekly kid's nights at Hurricane Grill and Wings, Uncle Maddio's Pizza Joint and Texas Roadhouse.

The success of her facepainting business inspired Karen to branch out into related areas such as Spark Body Painting for non-face painting and The Face Paint Shop for retail sales of face painting and body art supplies to other painters, along with painting beautiful store windows for



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clients such as Capital City Runners and GroupFit 90. She also expressed her creativity through the long-running Meet the Masters program at Lemoyne Center for the Arts.

Karen achieved all that and so much more in her first fifty years that she decided to double down and achieve twice as much in the next fifty.

In the first fifty she:

joined a family with her mom Pat Baker, dad Larry Baker, older brother Keith Laton and younger sister Cheryl Townsend, along with stepsiblings David Baker, Neal Baker and Terrie Sullivan, while living in the San Francisco Bay Area and in Davis, CA.

despised high school and decided to dispense with it by graduating as quickly as possible and moving on to a bachelors from Sonoma State and a masters from UC Davis.

while living in Rohnert Park in Sonoma County, got married by mistake to Michael Schmidtman, but corrected her error by having two beautiful daughters, Whitney Jae Danger and Rebekke Schmidtman who were both the pride of her life to her last minute and who continue to be loved by two fathers, one step and one not.

spent the 90s and early 2000s finding host families for Japanese exchange students and being the queen of swag for Sonoma County radio powerhouse KZST, where she is still to be heard in on-air promos.

met a wonderful soulmate, Roger, and this time the marriage lasted until they were separated by her death on Feb 9, 2018 from surgical complications. While loving their rosebush enveloped home in Santa Rosa CA, they together filled out their family with three more children just as beautiful as her first two: Miles J McAllister Mercer, Bentley Rae Mercer and Zane Xavier Delmonico Mercer, who were also the pride of her life to the last, and continue to be so for their dad.

decided to follow in her mother's bold and entrepreneurial footsteps by creating a series of successful businesses: Cakearoni, FairyDust Face Painting, Spark Body Painting, and The Face Paint Shop.

was loved by hundreds of people from around the world in her many diverse social circles: face and body art, dance, dog rescue, Chiles PTA, Totes Redic, storytellers, secret squirrels, LulaRoe, PeopleLink, SRMC, Monte Vista, Pokemon Go, and many, many, many more.

And since September she made plans to:



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reacquire her motorcycle endorsement and buy a bike (done!)
study tarot (working on it)
join an improv group (done!)
learn to sing karaoke (working on it)
find new businesses to start (working on it)
be happy with her body image (done, for far too short a time)
Pokemon Go level 40! (almost there: 37.5) and get Mr. Mime (sigh)
learn pole dancing (started)
learn to draw caricatures (started)
train her new Great Dane puppy, Lexi (started, does it ever really finish?)
join the Bold Betties women's adventure organization (done!)
move out of Florida (working on it)
go backpacking around Spain with daughter Bentley (heavy sigh)
take over the world (done!)

There will be a viewing Friday February 16 from 5-8 PM at Lifesong Funerals, 20 South Duval St, Quincy FL. A celebration of Karen's life will be held Sunday February 18 from 1-3 PM in the Chiles High School Cafeteria, 7200 Lawton Chiles Ln, Tallahassee FL with a party to follow at the Bannerman Crossings outdoor pavilion, 6668 Thomasville Rd, Tallahassee FL.


Karen will be cremated and her remains will return to a family-owned redwood forest on a ridge overlooking the Pacific, in Sonoma County near Bodega Bay CA where a ceremony for California friends and relatives will be held later this year.

In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation to the rescue organization who saved Karen's Great Dane, Lexi from a puppy mill: Big Dog Rescue of Tallahassee, www.bigdogrescue.com/donate.html or PO Box 15571 Tallahassee 32317.


While Karen would have wanted everyone to be comfortable with their choice of attire for her celebration, her family would like you to know that she would have been delighted if you choose to add a splash (or much more than a splash) of color to your outfit.

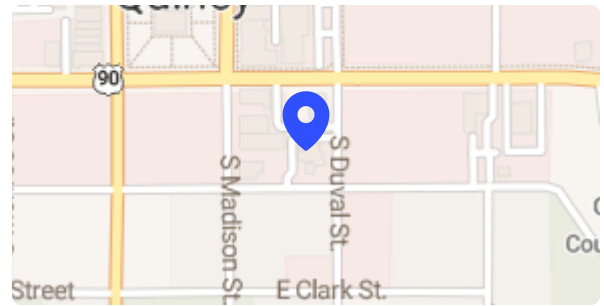


Visitation

 **Friday**, February 16, 2018

 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM ET


 **Lifesong Funerals & Cremations - Quincy**
20 S Duval St, Quincy FL 32351

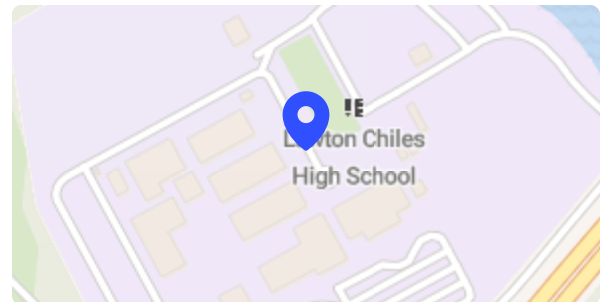


Memorial Service

 **Sunday**, February 18, 2018

 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM ET

 **Chiles High School**
7200 Lawton Chiles Lane, Tallahassee FL 32312





Tribute Wall

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Sarah posted:

Karen was the best writing workshop teacher I ever had and I will never forget my time with her. I always looked forward to Thursday because writing workshop was the highlight of my week. She was always so patient with me no matter how long my story got or how ridiculous the plot twists. She inspired me, not only in writing but in every facet of my life. I just wanted you to know how much she meant to me. Sophia Hill

March 20 at 9:39 AM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Karen by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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