



Barbara Newton Willson

August 10, 1937 - December 9, 2025

Barbara Willson passed away peacefully at the age of 88 at Hospice of the Chesapeake in Pasadena, MD. She was born to Robert and Lillian Newton in Chester, PA in 1937 and grew up in a small house full of her large and loving family.

After graduating from high school, Barbara received a scholarship from Moore College of Art & Design. She worked summers in Beach Haven, NJ. She eventually moved to Manhattan, where she worked at ABC-TV alongside luminaries like Howard Cosell. She met Thomas Willson in Manhattan, and they married in 1965. They took trips to the United Kingdom and Europe, and they lived in Manhattan with their daughter Nicole until Tom's job with the American Iron and Steel Institute took the family to Gaithersburg, MD in the early 1970s. Barbara worked in real estate and finances, took art classes, practiced gourmet cooking, and enjoyed sailing in nearby Annapolis.

After Tom's untimely death in 1987, Barbara relocated to Annapolis and continued to sail. In the sailing community, she met Howard Slempe, who became her beloved partner until his death in 2018. Barbara divided her time between Hampton, VA, where she lived with Howard, and her own beautiful home in Chesapeake Beach, MD. She enjoyed sailing along the Virginia waterways with Howard on his boat Thistle, hunting down antique furniture and Tiffany art glass in Virginia and Maryland, watching programs like

Jeopardy and Downton Abbey, and traveling around the country to watch figure skating competitions and shows.

Barbara's warm, kind heart and generous nature drew people to her throughout her life. She could walk into any place and make a new friend. She was deeply compassionate and loved to help others, whether it was rescuing fallen baby birds, adopting shelter cats, or reaching out to anyone she felt needed her support. To the end of her days, she expressed gratitude for the wonderful life she led and all the love she experienced.

She was preceded in death by her parents, her brother, her husband Thomas Willson, her partner Howard Slempe, and her sister Anne Buffington. She is survived by her daughter Nicole Willson (Bill Murphy), her niece Tracie Paullin (Rick), her stepdaughters Sidney Willson Dillon (Mark) and Stephanie Willson, and many extended family members and friends.

In lieu of flowers, please donate to Hospice of the Chesapeake, which took kind and loving care of Barbara in her last days. A celebration of life will be held for Barbara at a future date.

Tribute Wall



“ Kenneth N. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Barbara Newton Willson.

Kenneth N. - December 15, 2025 at 10:09 AM