



## Ellen Brie Houseknecht

February 28, 1977 - December 14, 2021

Ellen Brie Houseknecht died of natural causes on 14 December 2021 in Silver Spring, Maryland. Ellen was born in State College, Pennsylvania, on 28 February 1977. She moved with her family to Columbia, Missouri, in 1978 and to Leesburg, Virginia, in 1992. Ellen graduated from Loudoun County High School in 1995 and from Longwood University in 2000 with a degree in Design and Technical Theater. Following college, Ellen worked in the theater community, mainly in the Washington DC and Baltimore region.

Ellen was her “own person” from the beginning of her life. At birth, she was this beautiful, tiny little baby who brought so much love and happiness into our house. She loved rainbows and searched each one for the “pot of gold” at the end. She adored her little brother, Walt – watching over him and protecting him as a baby, loving and respecting him always. Being part of Walt and Liane’s wedding was a great joy, only matched by her delight in gaining the perfect sister-in-law.

As a child, Ellen was a voracious reader and books that particularly captured her imagination were given special attention. She often adapted those stories into backyard plays featuring herself, her brother, and neighborhood children. She appeared in her first “real” play at age 11 and was hooked! She immersed herself in every available theater opportunity thereafter – community theater for children, junior-high and high school plays, forensics, college plays, and

summer stock via internships.

Ellen never lost her love for the theater and the magical worlds she helped create for others to experience. She brought her dedication, artistry, talent, and exuberance to stage managing, carpentry, and a spectrum of design and technical tasks – each facet of putting together a play or creating the setting for an event was a glorious challenge. Friendships made on the job remained a source of joy throughout her life.

No one was more delighted and excited when her little nieces, Lydia and Campbell were born. She interacted with them from the time they were babies, making them laugh, reading to them, playing games, modeling for them that it's okay and important to “be yourself”, to be silly and goofy whenever they could, and to show others that they care. She took Lydia to see several children's plays – wanting to share her love of theater firsthand. If Covid had not happened, she would have taken both of the girls to see more special plays.

Ellen brought games to all the extended family gatherings over the years, teaching her cousins to play some of her favorites like Star Wars Epic Duels. She made them laugh and they made her laugh, and it was the greatest thing to watch. She stayed in touch with her cousins, cheering them in their accomplishments, supporting them in hard times, truly delighting in events like their weddings. She was always one of the first on the dance floor and one of the last to leave. She loved holidays, chose the most thoughtful of gifts and made everyone feel special on their birthdays. Ellen celebrated life every day, finding the beauty in people, in nature and in her work.

Ellen rented in the home of close friends for many years, moving with them several times. They became a “second family” to her – a precious part of her life. When their boys were born, Ellen quickly embraced sharing in their care

and nurturing and a lasting bond formed. Ellen reveled in taking the boys on adventures – walking, geocaching, visiting beautiful parks and playgrounds, doing art projects, and playing games. She shared her love of books, often reading a bedtime story with the three of them snuggled up together. Ellen loved caring for the boys daily after Covid closed theaters and the bonds only grew stronger.

In recent years, Ellen became a hiking enthusiast and favorite locations included the Shenandoah National Park in Virginia and Sugarloaf Mountain in Maryland. While serving as stage manager for an eight-city national tour of the play Remarkably Normal, Ellen took every opportunity to enjoy and photograph the natural beauty while hiking in national and regional parks.

There is a saying, “it’s not the number of years in your life that count, but the life (and friends) in your years”. Ellen lived her days and loved her family and friends with abandon, prizing people above all material things.

Ellen is survived by her parents, Stephanie and David, her brother, Walter (Liane), two nieces (Lydia and Campbell), her maternal grandmother (Bernice Quay), three aunts, one uncle, and eleven cousins. Beyond her immediate family, Ellen is survived by scores of treasured friends, young (especially two special little boys) and old.

Ellen’s family requests no flowers, please. Donations in Ellen’s memory to one of these charities, which she strongly supported, would be warmly welcomed.

Planned Parenthood – please consider Specific Giving to a local organization of Planned Parenthood, for example DC, MD or VA at:  
[weareplannedparenthood.org/onlineactions/cOJVhOyrzkq4uBcxVekXFA2?tabs=true&sourceid=1000061](https://weareplannedparenthood.org/onlineactions/cOJVhOyrzkq4uBcxVekXFA2?tabs=true&sourceid=1000061)

Know Your Rights Camp at: [knowyourrightscamp.com](http://knowyourrightscamp.com)

Or one of DC's smaller local professional theaters, such as

[taffetypunk.com](http://taffetypunk.com)

[happenstancetheater.com](http://happenstancetheater.com)

[rorschachtheatre.com](http://rorschachtheatre.com)

# Tribute Wall

RM

“ I worked with Ellen on several productions. She was a terrific team player and a pleasure to be around. What a sad and shocking loss; her memory shall remain a blessing.

RM - February 08, 2022 at 04:45 PM

BR

“ Dave and Steph, Meghan and I are heartbroken to learn of Ellen's passing. No parent should have to go through what you have this past month. Please accept our sincere condolences and know that you are in our thoughts. Bill & Meghan Rouse

Bill Rouse - January 28, 2022 at 03:35 PM

TH

“ She sounded like a wonderful person. Please accept my deepest condolences. Tom Homza

Tom Homza - January 13, 2022 at 04:41 PM

CP

“ Dear Dave and Steph, I'm very sorry to learn of the loss of Ellen. I can't know what you have gone through during the past month, but I hope you are able to find some peace and light as time passes. Chris Potter

Chris Potter - January 12, 2022 at 02:16 PM

AD

“ Dave, I am so sorry for your loss. You and your family are in my thoughts and prayers.

Alex Demas - January 07, 2022 at 05:53 PM

MM

“ Dear Dave and Stephanie, My heart aches for you over the loss of your dear daughter, Ellen. Her passion for sharing her time and love with others was remarkable. I hope you can take comfort in your fond memories. Kind regards, Marti Miller

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**Marti Miller** - January 06, 2022 at 02:37 PM

TS

“ It is so hard to lose a child and my heart goes out to you as you grieve for Ellen. She clearly was a lovely person and left much too soon.

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**Tribute Store** - January 06, 2022 at 12:07 AM

JO

“ Stephanie, Dave, and Walt, We just heard the very sad news of Ellen's passing. My heart breaks for you and your family. Yours in the kindest, nicest family I have ever met, and I know you now have a tremendous void in your life. But I know that the love and wonderful memories that you have and share will soon fill that void. I am sure that before long there will be a smile on your face and in your heart, as well as a tear in your eyes. Our prayers are with you. Paul and Janelle Ochs, and Colin Ochs.

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**Janelle A. Ochs** - January 05, 2022 at 07:35 PM

CG

“ Dave, I'm so saddened to hear about your loss. My heartfelt condolences go out to you and your family.

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**Chris Garrity** - January 05, 2022 at 12:02 PM

JA

“ Please accept our most heartfelt sympathies for your loss... Our thoughts are with you and your family during this difficult time.

Jim Mosley & Andrew Austin - January 04, 2022 at 08:07 AM

JE

“ You are in our thoughts Dave & Stephanie & all in Ellen's warm circle of family & friends. Hers was clearly a wonderful & much loved soul. A sad loss.

Julie Dumoulin & Dick Emanuel - January 03, 2022 at 07:53 PM

SR

“ She sounds like a bright, warm light in the world. Thinking of you -

Sarah Ryker - January 03, 2022 at 05:18 PM

JH

“ Dave, My heart goes out to you and your family at this difficult time.  
Jane Hammarstrom

Jane Hammarstrom - January 03, 2022 at 05:13 PM

BF

“ May her memory be a blessing to her family.

Becky Hoey & Family - December 31, 2021 at 05:37 PM

JR

“ We are so very sorry for your loss. She really was a free spirit and a light has gone out in the world. Hopefully, sometime in the future, the pain you feel now will be outweighed by your fondest, and funniest memories of Ellen. Know our best thoughts are streaming to you both. Love, Jingle and Bill

Jingle Ruppert - December 31, 2021 at 03:32 PM

AH

“ We are deeply sorry for your loss ~ *Simplicity Cremation & Funeral Services*

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**A Memorial Tree was planted for Ellen Brie Houseknecht - December 21, 2021 at 02:27 PM**