



Gail Allen Kleine

September 8, 1942 - January 26, 2025

Gail Allen Kleine, of Lansing, died quietly on January 26, 2025, after a life in which she was anything but quiet.

Gail moved to Lansing in 1966, devoting herself for many decades to family and community. She was active as a PTA leader at her children's schools and chaired the 1979 millage campaign that renewed funding for the schools during a period of tax revolt. In 1981, Gail was elected to the Lansing Board of Education, serving for 12 years. She was instrumental in putting the first female principal in a Lansing high school.

Gail also served for several years as executive director of Child Abuse Prevention Services, which operated the Family Growth Center. In 2006, Gail was honored by the Ingham County Women's Commission as its first Everyday Heroine for "working tirelessly to help end the cycle of abuse and neglect that too many of our children in Ingham County are forced to deal with" and collaborating with Debbie Stabenow to enact the Michigan Children's Trust Fund, which continues to provide a permanent source of funding for child abuse prevention through an income tax check-off.

After retiring, Gail served on the board of directors of Child & Family Charities and the Ingham County Family Center Advisory Board. She also volunteered for the Lansing Area AIDS Network, Allen Street Market, Junior Achievement, and the library, where she read to elementary school children. Her example of public and community service inspired her children to pursue careers in the non-profit, philanthropic, and government sectors. Gail's biggest travel

adventure was visiting her daughter Amy in a remote Moroccan village, where Amy was a Peace Corps volunteer.

Gail was an advocate of healthy eating before it was in vogue, which her children came to appreciate only later in life. There were no sugar cereals in Gail's kitchen, and her whole wheat pizza made up for in fiber what it lacked in taste. She taught after-school nutrition classes to elementary school students – which featured ants on a log as favorite snack – and led Weight Watchers groups. Later in life, she walked the Honolulu Marathon, which was a source of pride.

Gail was opinionated and outspoken, a strong, liberated woman who showed other women how to assert themselves and reach for their goals. From demanding better customer service to better outcomes for children, she never backed down.

Hard as an adversary, Gail was the best ally, friend – and mother – anyone could wish for. With a big smile and hearty laugh, she gave her love and support generously. In almost any setting, she was fun, irreverent, and unfiltered. As one friend said, “Gail was such a wonderful energy in my life and the lives of many others.” Whether she was dressing up as a pregnant nun for Halloween, swigging Wild Turkey from the bottle, or dropping an F-bomb, Gail did not act like she was part of the Silent Generation.

Gail was a lover of letters. A stickler for grammar, in her presence, no double negative, misplaced preposition, or “me” versus “I” mistake would go uncorrected. She read two books a week, especially mysteries, thrillers, and beach reads, did the newspaper crossword puzzle every day, and wrote the annual newsletter for her college class. For several years, Gail edited the Economic Report of the Governor. She passed her passion down to her children, who have published ten books among them.

Gail was born September 8, 1942 in New York City to the late Charles and Sidele Allen. She is the granddaughter of Jewish immigrants from eastern Europe. A Navy brat, she lived in many places growing up, including California, Massachusetts, and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. She graduated from

Glen Burnie High School in Maryland, where she was editor of the school paper, and from Western Maryland (now McDaniel) College, where she met Robert Kleine, to whom she was married for 23 years.

Gail is survived by her longtime partner Nancy, children Ted, Andrew (Kelly), and Amy (Jeff Ditter), and grandchildren Sara Gail, Schroeder, Astrid, Lark, Birch, and Rose.

A celebration of Gail's life will be held at 2:00 on May 17, 2025 at J.W. Sexton High School, 102 McPherson Ave., Lansing. All are welcome.

In lieu of flowers, Gail's family asks that donations be made in her memory to Child and Family Charities, which now runs the Family Growth Center.

Donations can be made at www.childandfamily.org