



Ilona C. Peterson

August 11, 1949 - August 13, 2025

Ilona C. Peterson, a devoted wife, mother, grandmother, and retired Federal Employee, passed away at INOVA Fairfax Hospital on August 13, 2025 at the age of 76, after battling Undifferentiated Pleomorphic Sarcoma cancer . Born in Bremen Germany on August 11, 1949, Ilona immigrated with her family to Massachusetts in 1957, obtaining her US citizenship in 1963. She was preceded in death by her mother Irmgard H. Classen, step father Wilhelm Classen, father Kuno Brandt, and sister Monica Yanakakis. She attended public school in Middleton, MA and graduated in 1968 from Masconomet Regional High School. Ilona went on to complete her Bachelors Degree with high honor in 1972 at Northeastern University with majors in Foreign Languages (French, German, Russian) and Political Science. She obtained her Masters Degree in French Literature in 1974 from Brown University.

Ilona is survived by her high school sweetheart husband of 53 years Arthur G. Peterson. Her surviving children are daughter Melissa M. Major of Severna Park, MD and Nicholas A. Peterson of Glen Allen, VA. She had six grandchildren.

After their marriage Ilona joined her newly commissioned Army Officer husband at Fort Bragg, NC. Living in Southern Pines, NC she went on to join her husband as an intelligence analyst with the US Army 6th PSYOP Battalion of the 4th Psychological Operations Group, JFK Center for Special War.

Ilona moved with her family to Manassas, VA in 1978 and started working as a foreign intelligence analyst with the Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress where she supported the Armed Forces Medical Intelligence Center (now the National Center for Medical Intelligence) with foreign medical capabilities research. Ilona went on to become a European Acquisition Specialist with the Library of Congress. She headed a major project utilizing computer network technology to exploit foreign language periodical access with the Library of the University of Regensburg, Germany. She retired from the Library of Congress in 2012 after 34 years of outstanding public service.

Ilona's burial is planned at an intimate graveside service in Topsfield, MA on September 20, 2025. Friends and relatives are encouraged to donate in her name to the American Cancer Society.

Tribute Wall



“ *My heartfelt sympathy.*

Char Newland - October 16, 2025 at 04:15 PM



“ *You always brightened my day Ilona. I will miss you. RTH*

R. Todd Holden - August 19, 2025 at 09:30 AM