



Karen Forsberg

March 2, 1961 - February 16, 2025

Karen Forsberg (Karen Dee Goodman), 63; of Chicago's Lakeview neighborhood; chef, playwright, bartender, and fabulous redhead; passed away suddenly on February 16, 2025, following a brain hemorrhage.

Karen's life was so rich with experience that she often thought people might suspect she was full of it.

Born in Los Angeles, Karen attended Taft High School in Woodland Hills and graduated from Mission Bay High School in San Diego. Karen learned to cook at a young age, assisting in the family catering company. She took classes at Santa Monica College and traveled Europe for two years before attending culinary school.

In 1983, she moved to Chicago and worked at Ed Debevic's as "Pearl". By day she waitressed and by night pursued her passion for theater, working at the Goodman, Steppenwolf, and went on to co-found the Prop Theatre. Karen wrote and directed many successful productions such as *Erotica*, and *Little Birds*, based on the writings of Anaïs Nin, and *Mass Murder*- a series of serial killer monologues, which she eventually brought to L.A., casting her father and sister as John Wayne Gacy and Genene Jones.

Karen lived in Cortona and was the only female chef in Tuscany. In Italy, she

met an artist named Enzo, locking eyes across a crowded piazza. They fell in love, returned to Los Angeles in 1995. They eloped to Las Vegas, living happily until Enzo's untimely death. When returning to L.A. she began working at Il Fornaio in Beverly Hills, once again taking her place as the first and only female chef at the time.

In 1998, Karen connected with her second husband, Eric Forsberg. After marrying, the couple welcomed their daughter, Lola Forsberg in 1999. She took a break from the kitchen, transitioning to real estate as she couldn't taste the food during her pregnancy. Karen embarked on a career as a realtor in Hollywood, flipping houses until 2008. She also made campy horror films with her then-husband, Eric. Her return to cooking was sparked by a high-profile private chef gig that led her back into the kitchen. As a private chef to the stars, she cooked for a Russian billionaire, a famous rapper, and many high-profile clients. She was a repeat contestant on the Food Network's Guy's Grocery Games. While in L.A. she served as menu designer and head chef at Little Toni's in North Hollywood, and as private chef to the Tapatio Hot Sauce family, among many other food achievements.

Karen and her daughter returned to Chicago in 2019 with the plan to produce another theater piece, Karen's Food Porn- a semi-autobiographical erotic play alongside a five-course meal. Shortly upon arriving to Chicago, the coronavirus pandemic affected her ability to pursue this production. She returned to waitressing for Lettuce Entertain You and Karen later became the head chef at the Hilton Garden Inn in Evanston. She began focusing more of her attention on work in the home, beginning to cook and sell food out of her home for Schmeal, and pursuing an interest in pickle making, for "Pearl's Pickles".

Karen loved creating meaningful experiences for others. She was a thoughtful, giving, and witty friend and mother. She was an honorary chosen

mom to many of her daughter's friends. Politically progressive, Karen was pleased to volunteer as a driver during the 2024 Democratic National Convention and to spend her last Mother's Day as an Adopt-a-mom for local queer and trans youth. Most recently, she had the unique and meaningful experience of working with her daughter at Bucktown's Gallery Cabaret, a local bar and performance space.

Devoted mother and good friend of Lola Juliangela Forsberg. Dear sister of Keith (Patti O'Farrell) Goodman of Carlsbad, CA; Kenneth Goodman of Huntington Beach, CA; and Kelly Goodman of Sherman Oaks, CA:

Loving aunt of Joseph, Jared, Justin (Chelsea), and Chloe Goodman and Eir Kirk. Dear friend of Ginger, Gayle, Patsy, and countless others. Former spouse of Eric Forsberg.

Preceded in death by parents Burton Leon Goodman and Sonja Eva Goodman (nee Lazar), and spouse Enzo.

Faithful companion of Taffy Apple Udon, the cat.

Karen gifted her organs as a donor. The family has chosen green cremation.

A celebration of life is being held Monday, February 24, 4pm until last call (eulogies begin 6pm) at Gallery Cabaret.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in her name to The Theater Wit <http://www.theaterwit.org/>

Arrangements by Inclusive Funeral Care, 773-370-2959 or www.inclusivefuneralcare.com.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

FEB **24**. 4:00 PM - 11:59 PM (CT)

Gallery Cabaret
2020 N Oakley Ave
Chicago, IL 60647
<https://www.gallerycabaret.com/>

Eulogies and service of remembrance begins 6pm.

Tribute Wall



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Karen Forsberg.*



February 24, 2025 at 02:47 PM



“ *She will be missed by so many people. Chris and I enjoyed spending time and getting to know her, either sitting on our back patio, or at Kelly's house with the family. We have sent a donation to Theatre Wit in her honor. Love to all the family. ❤️*

Marie Pettit - February 24, 2025 at 01:32 PM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Karen Forsberg.*

February 24, 2025 at 12:26 PM