



## Karon Russell

January 15, 1957 - June 11, 2025

Karon Campbell Russell, 68, of Winthrop Harbor, Illinois, passed away June 11, 2025, after a year-long aggressive battle with cancer. She passed away under hospice care at Swedish Hospital in Chicago, surrounded by the love of her family, friends, and coworkers.

Born in Dundee, Scotland and raised in Evanston, Illinois, Karon attended St. Nicholas Grammar School and graduated from St. Scholastica High School in Rogers Park in 1975. She had many jobs over the years, starting with Wieboldt's Department Store in Evanston. Karon worked as a paralegal, waiting tables, and enjoyed a long career at the Illinois Secretary of State, where she rose to District Manager for the Department of Motor Vehicles.

The Gillans were a very proud Scottish family! The siblings were raised to be more Scottish than kids who actually grew up there. They frequently traveled to Scotland, attended Highland Games all over the United States, and attended summer camp in Nova Scotia to hone their Highland Dance skills and to learn Gallic.

Karon was always active in local politics, starting from her time in Chicago. She was very efficient- a vibrant problem solver, and she always had a smile on her face. These attributes and hard work were always to the advantage of her employers. Karon's coworkers were very important in her life- they were

also friends.

Karon cherished time at her home, which was just a mile from North Point Harbor, where she docked her boat. She loved reading and sleeping overnight on the water. Boating was a lifestyle for Karon and J.R., her husband of twenty years.

Karon was always a big supporter of her nieces and nephews- she helped organize Highland Dance Competitions, drove around the Midwest for basketball tournaments, and brought the sunshine to birthday parties. She loved to dance and to sing, especially Janis Joplin.

Loving wife of John Garhard "J.R." Russell. Dear sister of Alex "Sandy" (Susan), Colleen, Leslie, and Gavin (Kate Burns) Gillan. Devoted aunt of Kyle, Andrew (Virginia), Colin, Ryan, Stuart, Allison (Eric Wilson), and Isla. Great-aunt of Quinn, Beau, and Bronx.

Preceded in death by parents Alexander Brown Gillan and Frances Josephine Gillan (nee Mulholland).

Proud momma of Rosie the Pitbull and the late Mia the Pitbull.

The family is grateful for all the support at Swedish Hospital.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in her name to Illinois Saint Andrew Society <https://chicagoscotts.org/donate/> or Anti-Cruelty Society <https://anticruelty.org/donate>.

A celebration of Karon's life is being planned. Please check back to this website for information.

Arrangements by Inclusive Funeral Care 773-318-1305 or [www.InclusiveFuneralCare.com](http://www.InclusiveFuneralCare.com).

# Tribute Wall

MC

“ *My condolences on Karen's passing. I remember her as a very kind person.* ”



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**Maureen Cull** - July 22, 2025 at 08:34 PM

KB

*Thank you, Maureen. There's a celebration of Karon's life today, Saturday July 25 from 4-6:30pm at the marina where she had her boats. It's at The Tropics Restaurant, 301 North Point Drive, Winthrop Harbor, IL.*

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**Kate Burns** - July 26, 2025 at 10:22 AM

 Chris  
Bushbach  
Brown

“ *Please accept my deepest condolences on the passing of Karon. Although we have lost touch over the years, I have thought of her often. Remembering our times together in high school she was always in high spirits, loving, caring, and fun. Her beautiful smile and laughter always brought happiness to many.* ”  
*Chris Bushbacher Brown*

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**Chris Bushbacher Brown** - June 14, 2025 at 06:04 PM

KB

*Thank you, Chris. There's a celebration of Karon's life today, Saturday July 25 from 4-6:30pm at the marina where she had her boats. It's at The Tropics Restaurant, 301 North Point Drive, Winthrop Harbor, IL.*

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**Kate Burns** - July 26, 2025 at 10:23 AM

SH

“ Sending condolences to John and her family 🙏

Sharon Hatch - June 14, 2025 at 01:20 PM

KB

Thank you, Sharon. There's a celebration of Karon's life today, Saturday July 25 from 4-6:30pm at the marina where she had her boats. It's at The Tropics Restaurant, 301 North Point Drive, Winthrop Harbor, IL.

Kate Burns - July 26, 2025 at 10:23 AM

NS

“ I'm so sorry to hear of the loss of Karon. She was such a wonderful person and always lit up a room. We knew her from the harbor and she will truly be missed.

Nancy Schaul - June 13, 2025 at 07:51 PM

KB

Thank you, Nancy. There's a celebration of Karon's life today, Saturday July 25 from 4-6:30pm at the marina where she had her boats. It's at The Tropics Restaurant, 301 North Point Drive, Winthrop Harbor, IL.

Kate Burns - July 26, 2025 at 10:23 AM

PL

“ The memories we all made at North Point Marina and The Tropics are priceless and cherished! Soar with the angels and watch over your family and all your friends. Hugs and prayers to John and your family. RIP my F-Dock Buddy; XO Hugs my friend, Patti Lynch-Ferche' 🙏👉❤️🙏😭😭😭

Patti Lynch-Ferche - June 13, 2025 at 07:05 PM

KB

*Thank you, Patti. There's a celebration of Karon's life today, Saturday July 25 from 4-6:30pm at the marina where she had her boats. It's at The Tropics Restaurant.*

Kate Burns - July 26, 2025 at 10:24 AM

AR

“ *Karon was one of the sweetest kindest lady I knew! Her friendship with me my cousins Kori & mark was magnificent! Condolences to JR and her sisters as well as friends! I loved her very much!*  
*Adina*

Adina RichardsParks - June 13, 2025 at 04:59 PM

KB

*Thank you, Adina. There's a celebration of Karon's life today, Saturday July 25 from 4-6:30pm at the marina where she had her boats. It's at The Tropics Restaurant, 301 North Point Drive, Winthrop Harbor, IL.*

Kate Burns - July 26, 2025 at 10:24 AM

RM

“ *CONDOLENCES TO THE ENTIRE FAMILY. REST PEACEFULLY BOOMER, WITH LOVE, RO.*

ROLAND J. MURA - June 13, 2025 at 04:52 PM

KB

*Thank you, Roland. There'll be a celebration of Karon's life at Prairie Moon Restaurant in Evanston on Sunday, August 10 in the afternoon. We'll send you details.*

Kate Burns - July 26, 2025 at 10:25 AM

RM

“*ROLAND J. MURA sent a virtual gift in memory of Karon Russell*



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**ROLAND J. MURA** - June 13, 2025 at 04:49 PM

KB

*Thank you for your gift.*

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**Kate Burns** - July 26, 2025 at 10:25 AM