



Debra "Debbie" Gift

August 8, 1951 - March 13, 2025

Debra "Debbie" Gift came into the world in Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, on August 8, 1951, bringing with her boundless creativity and a mischievous sense of humor—both of which would become her trademarks. Born to Anne and Robert Gift, Debbie graduated from Lock Haven High School and went on to earn a degree in interior design from The Art Institute of Pittsburgh.

From an early age, Debbie showcased her extraordinary talent through imaginative sewing projects. She created elaborate Halloween costumes and cherished stuffed animals for her little sister, and later in life for her daughter and grandchildren. Debbie was always making something for her loved ones—our home is brimming with her projects in various states of completion. Looking ahead, I know I will have many meaningful moments sorting through these creations and reflecting on how deeply she touched people's hearts.

Her creativity blossomed beautifully into adulthood as she became an accomplished quilter, crafting heirloom quilts that warmed friends and family—and occasionally the family pets. She was also an active member of the Prayer Shawl Ministry, a group that knits prayer shawls and blankets to offer comfort and support to individuals facing difficult times, whether due to illness, loss, or other challenges. To many children in State College, PA, she was the "Tooth Fairy," a magical figure in a hand-crafted costume, immortalized in the pages of the Centre Daily Times while at the Nittany Valley Mall. Her zest for

life was infectious. She was an avid runner, a member of the Hash House Harriers, and instilled in her daughter a lifelong love of running. Debbie was her children's biggest cheerleader, and her unwavering support extended to the kids they brought around. Most of the boys on the State College volleyball team affectionately called her "Mom," a testament to her nurturing spirit.

Not only was she gifted with a needle and thread, Debbie also had a green thumb. With her daughter Sarah's help, she cultivated an impressive garden that generously provided vegetables for family dinners, neighborly goodwill, Saturday's farmers market in downtown Irwin, and occasionally for grateful neighborhood wildlife.

Debbie's journey in love was fulfilled when she married her beloved Stephen McClure—whom she first met in their twenties. Later, in their forties, they rekindled their friendship, which blossomed into a lifelong marriage of dedication, love, kindness, travel, companionship, and plenty of hard work raising 4 wild and wonderful children. Their reconnection lasted a joyful 35 years.

Throughout her life, Debbie wore many professional hats, working in architectural design, placement testing for higher education, and office management. However, she found her greatest joy in family moments, especially with her children and stepchildren: Jonathan Williams of Harrisonburg, Virginia; Sarah Williams of Irwin, Pennsylvania; Eric McClure of Chicago, Illinois; and Brian McClure of Irwin, Pennsylvania.

One of Debbie's most inspiring qualities was her unwavering resilience paired with relentless optimism. Nearly 30 years ago, she faced a rare blood disorder and a lifesaving liver transplant, enduring numerous surgeries and medical challenges with grace, humor, and steadfast positivity.

Debbie passed peacefully at home on Thursday, March 13th, leaving behind a legacy defined by laughter, resilience, and creativity. She is lovingly remembered by her husband Stephen; her children Jonathan, Sarah, Eric, and Brian; her sister Patricia Gift of Brooklyn, New York; and her grandchildren Connor and Madelyn Williams of Harrisonburg, Virginia, and Emily and Eva McClure of Chicago, Illinois. She will also be dearly missed by her beloved cats, Maximus Prime—"the Maxi-est Cat of them all"—and Miss Chloe, whose loyalty she earned through generous offerings of affection, chicken hearts, and churu treats.

Debbie's idea of heaven likely involves endless dark chocolate, plenty of mystery novels to unravel, and an ever-blooming garden to tend—surrounded, of course, by family, feline companions, and friends both new and old.

In lieu of flowers please send donations to either the Salvation Army or your local ASPCA.

Cemetery Details

Penn Forest Natural Burial Park

121 Colorado Street
Verona, PA 15147

Tribute Wall

JS

“ *I'm sorry for your loss of this sweet and talented lady. May God give you peace.*

Jeanne Suehr

Jeanne Suehr - June 24, 2025 at 01:59 PM

AH

“ *So sad to hear of Debbie's passing. I've been missing her on Facebook. I remember when I would deliver her and her husband's medicine to them, I enjoyed talking with her and visiting her cat. Sympathy and condolences to Stephen and family.*

Alicia Hyer - April 09, 2025 at 03:04 PM

KR

“ *sad to see Debbie's obit- she was a client of mine when I taught aerobics- and she never let her kidney transplant get in the way or complain! We went to see Gino Vanelli together in Pgh- we shared the same love of music! RIP beautiful lady- sounds like you made friends everywhere you went!*

kimberly racan - March 21, 2025 at 10:28 AM