

**Kathleen Ann Rogers Wall** was born December 2, 1943, and passed away June 6, 2026, leaving behind a life so generously and purposefully lived that her gifts will continue to reverberate in the lives that she impacted for generations.

She was a nurse, an educator, an advocate, a social worker, a leader, an executive, a conservationist, a scientist, a cook and baker, a craftsperson, a grant writer, a gardener, a writer, and an artist. A woman whose insatiable curiosity about the world was matched only by her determination to make it better.

### A Life as a Nurse of All Things Great and Small

Kathleen began her professional life with a calling to nursing. She earned her Registered Nurse degree from Charles S. Wilson Memorial School of Nursing in Binghamton, New York, launching a nursing career that would span decades and disciplines. Her early work at Roswell Park Cancer Center in Buffalo, New York, placed her among the pioneers of dialysis and transplant nursing. There, she wrote the original anticoagulation protocol for dialysis machines.

From Buffalo, she brought her creative energy to Mary Imogene Bassett Hospital in Cooperstown, New York — the historic teaching hospital affiliated with Columbia University — where she established the dialysis unit from the ground up. It was in Cooperstown while caring for a patient that she met Alex Wall, her husband. They were married in 1973 and lived in the nearby Hamlet of Fly Creek. There they began their family and welcomed their daughter Jennifer Hope into the world in 1974.

Kathi's nursing journey next took her to Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, one of America's foremost medical institutions, where she worked on the surgical floor. During this period she lived in Pepperell, Massachusetts, when in 1977 her son Alexander James (A.J.) was born.

### Educator, Creator, Community Builder in Maine

The couple moved to Maine in 1978, into a centuries-old farm in Belgrade that they named AppleWynd Farm. Kathi taught at and ran the New Day School in Readfield, a unique cooperative school, where she instilled a lifelong love of science and learning in many children, including her own. During this chapter, she created a summer science camp and a Rocket Club — introducing children to the wonders of model rocketry and astronomy. Long before STEM education was a national priority, she was building it in rural Maine.

She later served as a teaching assistant in the Anthropology department at Colby College in Waterville, Maine, and completed her Bachelor of Liberal Arts degree at Skidmore College in 1996.

Her intellectual scope was both broad and deep. Kathi was a voracious reader — consuming an estimated 50 books a year across mystery, science, history, philosophy, and periodicals like Scientific American, and National Geographic. She studied Art at the University of Maine, was an expert painter and illustrator, and an artisan at crafts like needlework, knitting, and crochet.

### Advocacy for Children and Survivors

Kathi used her nursing background to enter the field of child abuse prevention. Working alongside Dr. Lawrence Ricci — Maine's pioneering child abuse pediatrician and founder of the Spurwink Child Abuse Program — she devoted herself to protecting children and documenting the painful evidence necessary to bring predators to justice. Under Governor Angus King's administration, she co-founded the Maine Children's Collaborative, bringing together statewide resources for at-risk youth. She also received an award from Project Hope, from the Office of Clinical Services at Cony High School for her service from 1997 to 1999.

Nothing for Kathi was merely a job. She used her own challenges to inspire others to recover from their trauma and bring visibility to the social disease of sex abuse. She conceived and organized The Art Inside, an exhibition of artwork created by survivors of abuse, which she brought all the way to Dublin, Ireland — giving voice and visibility to women whose experiences had so often been silenced. Long before the “me too” movement, she helped others not to live in shame and fear, and to recover. The awareness she raised brought publicity and focus, and prevented harm. The Families First organization honored her with the “Real Hero” award in 2000 for the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

In 2005, she was accepted and inducted into the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Executive Nurse Fellows program, one of the nation's most prestigious leadership fellowships for senior nurses. They recognized her as exactly what she was: a nurse leader capable of transforming health and human services at the community and national level.

### Building Community for Young People

In Augusta, Kathleen founded The Edge, a teen after school club that gave young people in Maine's capital city a safe, creative, and supportive place to grow and have community after school. She transformed a defunct restaurant and bar into an activity center and chem-free concert venue, bringing community and life skills to numerous young people in the area. With creative pragmatism, she had her German shepherd trained to be a drug sniffer.

The program eventually grew into the Boys & Girls Club of Augusta, Maine — an enduring institutional legacy that continues to serve the region's youth. The governor invited her to tea in her honor at the Blaine House in 2003 for service to Maine's children. Her programs won awards such as Kennebec Valley Chamber of Commerce Community Service Award in 2009 and received recognition from Sen. Susan Collins. During this era, she won an award from Spurwink Services for Courageous Youth Advocacy in 2011 and the Board of Directors honored her for 15 years of service. The City of Augusta honored Kathi with a day in her honor, Kathi Wall Day, on October 14, 2011.

#### Steward of the Natural World

Kathleen's love of the natural world was as deep as her love of people. She loved documentaries on wild places and animals and would remark that watching animals caring for their young was an inspiration for her life. In 2011, she was recruited to serve as Executive Director of the Seven Lakes Alliance (formerly the Belgrade Regional Conservation Alliance), the organization dedicated to conserving the lands, water quality, and natural heritage of the Belgrade Lakes Watershed in Central Maine. This project expanded as she supported the expansion of the Kennebec Highlands to include an additional area of hills and waterways feeding the lakes and full of animals and trails. In that role she brought the same passion and founding energy she had brought to dialysis units and teen clubs — protecting the lakes and landscapes that defined the region she loved. She helped Belgrade receive a Spirit of America Foundation award in 2014.

Her relationship with the natural world was holistic and not merely professional. Throughout her life she nursed injured and orphaned animals with the same devotion she had brought to patients and children. People would bring her injured animals as they knew this about her. She convened a team inclusive of a wildlife veterinarian and a dentist who created a new bill for a wild duck that had lost its bill in an incident with a fisherman (a story that made the national news), nurtured three baby raccoons back to the wild after they lost their mother, and did the same for orphaned starlings, squirrels, and whatever else landed on her doorstep. If something had life and potential and needed nursing of any

kind, Kathi found a way to nurture it.

## The Augusta Colonial Theater

Kathi turned her formidable grant-writing and leadership talents toward the restoration of the Colonial Theater — a once-grand Augusta landmark that had been dark for over five decades. As the Executive Director for four years, and through her efforts and those of collaborators, the theater secured funding from the Maine Development Foundation's RevitalizeME program, the National Park Service's Historic Preservation Fund, the Davis Family Foundation, Maine Preservation, and ultimately \$1.5 million in federal funding for renovations. Senator Susan Collins toured the site with Kathi. In 2022, the Colonial Theater hosted its first ticketed entertainment event in over 53 years. It was, characteristically, a project in which Kathleen saw not just a building but something beautiful that would bring hope and community. During this time, in 2020, Kathi also ran and was elected to the service of Belgrade, Maine, as selectperson.

## Remarks

To know Kathi was to be challenged and elevated. She did not simply observe the world — she questioned it, asked what could be, and brought beautiful things into existence with a scientist's rigor, a nurse's compassion, and an artist's creativity.

Her insatiable curiosity and drive for knowledge across disciplines fueled a dynamic creativity that she converted into action after action, project after project. She was bold, spoke truth to power, and was unafraid to challenge the status quo.

She is survived by her husband Alex, her daughter Jen, her life partner James McWalter and their blended family including their children Claire and Charlie Derkazarian, Jack, Cameron, and Alexandra McWalter. She is also survived by her son Alex (whom she called A.J.), his wife Marie Kent and their daughter Lillian Wall (with whom Kathi shares a birthday). She is survived by her nephews and their families: William Rogers II, his wife Aida and son Benjamin; and Justin Rogers, and his wife Kath Todd, and their daughters Grace Todd-Rogers and Hannah Todd-Rogers.

She is survived, too, by the dialysis patients who lived because of her protocols, the teenagers who learned that they were cared for in the communities and centers that she built, the children of multiple generations that she taught, the children protected under programs she founded, the lakes, the forests and the fields she helped conserve, and an

historic theater and center for the community in Augusta, Maine, that is being brought back to life because of her efforts and leadership.

She faced her own mortality with the same courage that she faced everything. She will be dearly missed by all touched by her extraordinary life.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to Kathi's Quest for the Augusta Colonial Theater

[//www.augustacolonialtheater.com/kathis-quest-for-the-augusta-colonial-theater](http://www.augustacolonialtheater.com/kathis-quest-for-the-augusta-colonial-theater)