

## Denise Claire (Juel) Kleffman,

Nov. 17, 1954 - Sept. 18, 2018



**HARLAN** – Denise Claire Juel passed away Tuesday, September 18, 2018 at Providence St. John's Hospital in Santa Monica, CA after losing her battle with melanoma skin cancer. Denise was born on Nov. 17, 1954 in Audubon. She was baptized at the Lutheran church in Kimballton. She resided on a farm until the age of 4 when she moved to Harlan and confirmed at the Immanuel Lutheran Church. She graduated from Harlan Community High School in 1973. Denise married Kenneth Kleffman from Portsmouth upon graduating high school and moved to Darmstadt, Germany while Ken served in the U.S. Army. After Ken was discharged from the Army, they both returned to Harlan for 14 years. Ken worked as a general contractor and Denise worked as an executive administrator for the principal at Harlan Community High School. In 1982 while living in Harlan, Denise gave birth to their son, Justin. In 1989 the couple moved to Torrance, CA. Ken continued working as a finish carpenter and Denise worked as an executive administrator at The Aerospace Corp. In 1992, the couple divorced. Justin attended West High School and later graduated with honors from the Univ. of California San Diego in computer engineering. Denise continued to work at The Aerospace Corp., could type 120 words per minute and was promoted to Associate Business Manager and worked on the executive floor until October 2, 2017 when she went out on disability from her illness.

Denise re-connected with Alan L. Findlay at their 30th Harlan Community High School 2003 class reunion. Even though Alan and Denise grew up in the same hometown, they did not realize they were in the same kindergarten class until after they began talking to one another at the reunion. Denise and Alan never dated all through high school. After the reunion Denise and Alan tele-dated for more than a year. They became re-acquainted and after several visits to one another, fell in love. After his divorce, Alan moved to Los Angeles in late 2004 to be with Denise. Denise and Alan were married in June of 2009 on Megan's Beach in St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands. Denise and Alan enjoyed many adventures to beautiful and exotic locations and made fantastic memories.

Denise had many interests and a vivacious passion for cooking and was constantly trying new recipes. Her home has four paper boxes filled with recipes she wanted to try. Denise was always so worried about the new recipes and would ask Alan if he liked what she had prepared. If Alan said yes, she would type the recipe on a 3 x 5 card, file it in one of the four alphabetized shoe box size recipe boxes and post it on Facebook for everyone to enjoy. Some of the recipes were from her mom and her grandmother Johansen. Alan used to chuckle when Denise would say to Alan, "if there is ever a fire in the house, grab my recipe boxes first!" Oh how Denise loved to cook!

One of the first things that attracted Alan to Denise was her passion for exploration, new adventures, and her desire to try anything once. She loved 60's rock & roll music, snorkeling, photography, hiking, gardening and taking care their Ragamuffin cats; Sophia, Olivia, Bailey and Moondoggy and Morgan, the outside feral cat who she tamed. Denise had a tender and nurturing heart towards all animals.

Her passion for photography is evidenced on the walls of her home which is lined with enlarged photographs of the beautiful vacations she meticulously planned and went on with Alan. Denise was never without a camera in her hands. As a couple, they were able to vacation to breath-taking destinations in California, Utah, Arizona, Nevada and the Caribbean. Alan will truly miss her sense of adventure.

Denise was one of two girls and is predeceased by her parents Folmer Juel who passed away in 1975 and Elsie Johansen Juel who passed away in 2002. Survivors are her loving husband, Alan L. Findlay, Gardena, CA; her son Justin, daughter-in-law Courtney, grandchildren Landon Kleffman and Emerson (Emmy) Kleffman, San Diego, CA; her sister Judy Reid and brother-in-law Bob, Torrance, CA, along with nephew Jeffrey, niece Jennifer and Glenn Adamick and their two children Reid and Tyler, Santa Clarita, CA; Kenneth Kleffman, Glenwood, (Justin's father) and several cousins, aunts and uncles.

A Celebration of Denise's Life will be held at 15227 Ermanita Avenue, Gardena, CA on Sat., Oct. 27 from 1 - 5 p.m. Her cremated remains will remain with her loving husband at their home.

In memory of Denise, monetary gifts are welcomed and will be donated to Cedars Sinai's "The Angeles Clinic" to continue their valuable research in fighting and someday curing melanoma cancer. Checks can be made payable

to Alan L. Findlay with "Denise Kleffman Memorial" written in the memo line and mailed to 15227 Ermanita Ave., Gardena, CA 90249. Flowers are also welcomed any time after Wed., Oct. 24 and before the Celebration of Denise's Life.

"May you all live a Forward Life, filled not with regrets, but with Rejoice. Look for the 'gift' in all life's situations and live your life looking through the windshield and not the rear view mirror."