

# Patricia Sue Potter-Efron

September 1, 1944 ~ July 1, 2022 (age 77)

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## Services

9:00 AM to 11:00 AM  
Hulke Family Funeral Home &  
Cremation Services  
3209 Rudolph Road  
Eau Claire, WI 54701

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Patricia Sue Potter-Efron, 77, passed away on Friday, July 1, 2022, at Azura Memory Care Center, from a combination of Lewy Body Dementia and the auto-immune disorder bullous pemphigoid.

Pat Potter was born on September 1, 1944 in St. Paul, MN. Her parents were C. Stanley Potter, the long-term Director of the Minnesota State Services for the Blind, and Norma Rusten Potter, a Ramsey County social worker. Pat grew up in South St. Paul and, later, on the banks of the St. Croix River directly across from Hudson, WI. She attended Stillwater High School, where she was a soloist in the choir and a very successful student. Pat also was a volunteer reader, creating recordings of books for the blind.

Pat earned a National Merit Scholarship and decided to attend Macalester College. It was there, during a photo shoot for incoming Merit Scholars, that she met her future husband, Ronald Efron, whom she married in 1965. Pat graduated from Macalester in 1966 with a B.A. in literature. Before graduating, however, she gave birth to her daughter Cynthia, the first of their three children.

Pat began graduate school at Purdue University at a time of great national unrest because of the war in Vietnam. Pat became active in anti-war activities, including conscientious objector counseling. Pat also gave birth during this period to Jennifer and Joshua. After five years, Ron was hired at an experimental college, Thomas Jefferson College (TJC) near Grand Rapids, MI. Soon Pat was employed to develop and run TJC's women studies curriculum, which included an extensive internship program. It was there that Pat discovered her natural ability to understand and help people in emotional pain. It was then that Pat, Ron, and their three children all agreed to hyphenate their names, becoming the Potter-Efron family, to preserve the Potter family name and to support gender equality.

When TJC closed the Potter-Efrons moved to Eau Claire, WI. Pat was hired as a family counselor at an adolescent chemical dependency treatment center in Mondovi and later at Midelfort Clinic's Behavioral Health Program. Realizing she needed advanced credentials, Pat obtained a Masters' Degree in guidance and counseling from UW-Stout. She then went into partnership with Ed Ramsey, founding First Things First Counseling Center in Eau Claire, where she worked until her retirement. Pat also taught several years at the Rutgers Summer School of Alcohol Studies.

Pat and Ron taught gestalt therapy classes for many years. They also co-wrote several books, including Letting Go of Shame; Letting Go of Anger; and Lewy Body Dialogue. Pat and Ron created the Domestic Violence

Offender Treatment Certification Program for the National Anger Management Association. Pat also facilitated workshops on anger management, domestic violence, and women's studies throughout the United States as well as in Canada, Panama, Denmark, Italy, Russia, and Hong Kong.

Pat's career ended when she was diagnosed with Lewy Body dementia in April 2018. She also became afflicted with a terrible auto-immune disorder named bullous pemphigoid. Nevertheless, she contributed actively to Pat and Ron's last project, the creation of a blog and book called Lewy Body Dialogue ([www.lewybodydialogue.com](http://www.lewybodydialogue.com)) in which they shared their reactions to such problems as Pat's giving up driving and her difficulty completing sentences. One reader commented that Pat was able to put into words what her husband never could communicate.

Pat was a wonderfully complex individual. She seemed to be able to see into the heart and soul of her friends and clients; she collected thousands of ordinary rocks because she saw something unique in each of them; she developed an alcohol problem but then abstained from alcohol and drugs for the last several decades of her life; she was an excellent nature photographer; she was full of the love of life; she was able to integrate traditional Lutheran Christianity with an intuitive form of animism to create her own unique sense of spirituality; she discovered an abandoned calf in the middle of the road on the coldest day of the year and brought him home in the back seat of her car; and she listened to animals and trees to gain their wisdom. She will be greatly missed.

Pat is survived by her husband of 57 years, Ronald; her two daughters Cynthia (Mark) Keith and Jennifer (Jeff) Berger; her son Joshua (Patty) Potter-Efron and four grandchildren: David Keith; Christopher (Lorilee Hanson) Keith; Tatianny Valeriano; and Elizabeth Berger. She was preceded in death by her parents and younger brother Kevin Potter.

Special thanks to Dr. Donn Dexter for diagnosing and treating Pat's dementia; to Dr. Sheila Galbraith for diagnosing and treating bullous pemphigoid; to nurses Emily Olson at Azura and Jennifer Insteness at Oak Leaf, and to all the staff at Azura Memory Care for their excellent and loving care; to the St. Paul and Eau Claire area Lewy Body Support Group members; to the Eau Claire ADRC dementia couples support group; to Miranda Hutchinson and the entire Mayo Clinic Hospice team, for all the comfort they have given Pat and our family during the difficult last period of Pat's life; to Cathy Reitz and the Stand in the Light Memory Choir for helping Pat rediscover her singing voice; and to AnneMarie Swanson for presiding at Pat's celebration of life event.

A Celebration of Life Service will be held on Saturday, July 23, 2022 at 11:00 a.m. at Hulke Family Funeral Home, 3209 Rudolph Rd., Eau Claire, WI 54701. A private family burial will take place at a later date. A visitation will be held on Saturday, July 23, 2022 at the funeral home, from 9:00 a.m. until the time of service.

To view the service for Pat online, please click the following link.

<https://boxcast.tv/view/patricia-potter-efron-service-l64m0r6he6aak6pjume> (<https://boxcast.tv/view/patricia-potter-efron-service-l64m0r6he6aak6pjume>)

Memorials to the Lewy Body Dementia Association, 912 Killian Hill Rd. S.W., Lilburn, GA 30047, are appreciated.

Friends and family may offer condolences online at [www.hulkefamilyfh.com](http://www.hulkefamilyfh.com).

Scroll down to view the Patricia Sue Potter-Efron memorial video.

Hulke Family Funeral Home & Cremation Services, 3209 Rudolph Road, Eau Claire, WI 54701 is assisting the family with the arrangements.