

Davis, Karen Ann (Schlicht) (April 11, 1939-- October 14, 2020)



Karen Schlicht from Sibley, Iowa was an active member of our class: Tassels (freshmen women's honorary group), White Caps (women's swimming), Young Democrats, Uncle Sam's Club, International Relations Club and the Social Coordinating Committee, as well as the women students advisory group (Baffleboard) her junior year in Main Hall. She obtained her B.A. degree in American Studies and an Iowa Teaching Certificate on June 4, 1961.

Karen then taught 7th grade for a year in Arlington, Illinois followed by two years as a salesperson and buyer for Charles A. Stevens Company, a women's clothing store on State Street in downtown Chicago.

In August 1964, Karen and Grinnell classmate, Allison Davis, were married, and they immediately left for the West African country of Mali (and former French colony) for the next three years. Karen used this time to become fluent in French, taught herself how to cook out of a Julia Child cookbook, reveled in daily shopping at the local markets and taught the children of American diplomats and USAID staff in a small school. While vacationing in Paris, she began a lifelong romance with the City of Light.

In 1967 Karen returned to Chicago, where her two sons were born: Jared Allison in 1968 and Cullen Jamison in 1971, the latter of whom obtained a B.A. degree from Grinnell in 1994. After Karen and Allison were divorced in 1987, she had custody of the sons and raised them on the North side of Chicago.

Karen acquired a M.A. degree in Linguistics from the University of Illinois-Chicago with an eye to teaching English as a foreign language while also starting a career in real estate sales. She loved to read and re-read Proust and a new discovery, Lee Childs' *Reacher*, and spending time in Paris and Provence. She was a devoted friend and a hostess of wonderful dinner parties. In 1986 she described herself as a "housewife, mother, chauffeur, gardener, volunteer and general all-around handy person." A devout Democrat, she made certain her vote for Biden-Harris counted in last year's presidential election.

For the last 25 years of her life, Karen had a loving, caring partnership with Bruce Thomas, whom she had met in connection with a real estate transaction. He was (and still is) active as a writer, consultant, teacher and non-profit entrepreneur helping children.

Karen is survived by her two sons, Jared's wife and brother-in-law (Chung and Taik Csong), five grandchildren (Quinn, Jamison, Spencer, Delilah and Wallace) as well as her companion and partner, Bruce Thomas. Contributions in her memory to the Shriner's Hospitals would be appreciated.



Duane W. Krohnke