



# Dawn Lynn Jorgenson Schmidt

September 5, 1957 - May 6, 2024

Dawn Lynn Jorgenson Schmidt, 66, of Fuquay-Varina, NC, passed away on May 6, 2024 with her children at her side.

Dawn was born on September 6, 1957 in Minneapolis, Minnesota to Patricia and Douglas Jorgenson. Throughout her childhood she lived in Arvada, CO, Houston, TX, and finally Avalon, CA, where she attended Avkñalon High School. She was a proud member of the graduating class of 1976, which she recalled being nicknamed “Genesis-Exodus.” During her high school years she was involved in glee club, as well as the theatre community. She often spoke fondly of her experience putting on *Oliver!* during her senior year of high school.

Following high school, Dawn moved to the mainland to attend Moore Park Junior College; however, she quickly discovered a knack for home improvement sales, and was quickly promoted to serve as Assistant Manager of Lumber City in the early 80s. It was there that she met her former husband, William (Bill) Schmidt, and they married in October of 1982. Over the next few years, Dawn and Bill welcomed their children, Erin Anne and William Drew (Billy). Just weeks before Erin’s birth, Dawn tragically lost her brother, Drew in a car accident. Some described Dawn and Drew as twins, as their birthdays were only a year apart. Their bond was evident in the way she still spoke about him decades later.

The late 80s would bring Dawn and her children back to Catalina Island to live with her beloved mother, Patricia. After the heartbreaking experience of Pat’s passing, they moved to Arizona to be close to Dawn’s father, Doug, and his family. Dawn called Glendale, AZ home until she moved to North Carolina with Erin’s family in 2018.

Dawn fell completely in love with North Carolina. She referenced it as “our place!” in conversation with Erin, and relished in their opportunities to explore. Perhaps the only thing she didn’t like about NC was the distance to her son and his family in Arizona. Throughout her career in the retail industry, Dawn held demanding positions such as managing both the plumbing and garden departments at multiple big-box home improvement stores. Additionally, she spent 15 years working in nutritional health retail. She valued the simple pleasure of feeling good, and loved having the opportunity to help her customers take better care of themselves.

All that time working in the home improvement industry paid off around the house, as

Dawn was the epitome of a true DIY gal. With a natural ability to tackle hands-on projects, she was known to take on anything from home improvement to auto care with little assistance beyond common sense, a can-do attitude, and a Google search. She was proud to have instilled this in her children as well. She was also an amazing cook, a skill she learned from her own mother. It would be remiss to remember Dawn without noting how fun she was. In recent years, she wore a warm smile as she reminisced about concerts attended, the 70s music she adored, and the good times of her youth. It is not the countless hours she spent in the retail industry or her ability to fix a leaky faucet that will be her legacy, but rather her role as a mother and grandmother. Dawn loved her children and grandchildren fiercely. Their relationships were so close that their lives were intertwined. In her final years, Dawn spent her days caring for her granddaughters, Aubrey and McKenna – providing adventures, snuggles, meals, love, and much more.

Dawn was preceded in death by her parents, Patricia Jorgenson and Douglas Jorgenson; brother, Drew Jorgenson; sister, Diane Nesser; and step-mother, Madeline Jorgenson. Dawn is survived and deeply missed by her daughter and son-in-law, Erin and Travis Byrd of Fuquay-Varina, NC; son and daughter-in-law, Billy and Diana Schmidt of Chandler, AZ; grandchildren Aubrey and McKenna Byrd, and William, Calum, and Holland Schmidt; half-sister, Dia Jorgenson; and half-brother, Doug Jorgenson.

A memorial service will take place on Friday, September 6, 2024 at 11am at St. Catherine's Catholic Church in Avalon, CA. A graveside service at Catalina Cemetery will immediately follow.

Memorial gifts may be made to the family through Venmo at Erin-Byrd-5.

In her last few days, Dawn shared that one of the most important things she wanted people to remember is, "Adventure is out there; you just have to go find it." A true seeker of adventure, she likely would have resonated with Helen Keller's words, "Life is either a daring adventure or nothing." For 66 years Dawn lived and loved through ups and downs, lessons learned and lessons taught, laughter and tears – a daring adventure, indeed.

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

SEP 6. 11:00 AM (PT)

St. Catherine's Catholic Church  
800 Beacon St.  
Avalon, CA 90704