



Gisela Hecken

September 19, 1935 - October 8, 2025

Gisela H. Hecken passed away peacefully on Tuesday morning, October 8, 2025, after a long illness, at the age of 90. She was born on September 19, 1935, in Hamburg, Germany, the daughter of Werner and Herta (Hacker) Burmeister.

Gisela began her career as a salesperson before meeting her husband, Rudolf, in Bad Hoenningen, Germany. They settled for several years in Aachen, Germany, where Rudolf attended graduate school, and later spent three years in Geneva, Switzerland. In 1968, they immigrated to the United States with their three young children, settling first in Andover, Massachusetts. They later made their home in Hilton Head, South Carolina, and eventually in Cary, North Carolina.

Through every move, Gisela's determination, warmth, and adaptability shaped a welcoming home for her family. She loved meeting new people and embraced each new culture, learning both French and English along the way. She was known for her wonderful cooking and her joy in entertaining friends and family. One of her favorite past times was a trip to the ocean whether in New England or in South Carolina. Gisela also had a lifelong passion for travel, exploring Europe, Africa, and Asia, but her greatest happiness was time spent with her family—especially her grandchildren and great-grandchild, who affectionately called her Oma.

She will be deeply missed by her children and their families: daughter Margit (Hecken) Iwanowicz and her husband, Ed, of Chapel Hill, NC and their children Peter and his wife, Madeline Dubner, and their son, Nolan of Newton, MA, Andrew Iwanowicz and his wife, Eleanor Sibal of Raleigh, NC, and Kaitlyn Iwanowicz of Watertown, MA; son Michael W. Hecken of Pittsboro, NC; and daughter Gabriele (Hecken) Bauman and her husband, John of Cary, NC, and their daughters Jessica Bauman and Cayla Bauman also of Cary, NC. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, Rudolf. She leaves behind extended family in Germany.

A private family service will be held at Wake Memorial Park in Cary, NC, on October 25. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made in Gisela's name to the Alzheimer's Association or American Diabetes Association.

Tribute Wall



“ *Peter, my deepest sympathies to you and your family. Love and hugs, Tina Lee*

Tina Lee - October 24, 2025 at 08:31 AM



“ *Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Gisela Hecken.*



October 24, 2025 at 08:20 AM