

LIZ COMTE REISMAN OBITUARY
10/14/1963-01/09/2019

Elizabeth Comte Reisman, a true Renaissance woman who was a journalist, an accomplished musician, an entrepreneur and a nature lover, died January 9 in Westport, CT. She was 55 years old.

Her family said the cause of death was a glioblastoma. They will always remember with great admiration how Liz lived with the disease for the past 30 months, living under the shadow of cancer while still exhibiting the love, caring and levity which characterized her entire life.

Liz was raised in Albany, California, and began a lifelong devotion to music, playing the flute with the Oakland Youth Symphony Orchestra, the Bay Area Wind Symphony and first chair at Albany High School. She went on to attend the University of California, Davis, graduating in 1986. She then attended the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University, earning a Master's Degree in 1988.

In 1989, Liz moved to New York City and embarked on a pioneering journalism career. She reported on the business of sports for several publications, including Sports Inc., The Sporting News, The National Sports Daily and Sport Magazine. She was among the first to break the age-old barrier which prohibited female reporters from the locker rooms of pro sports athletes, previously the exclusive domain of male reporters. She later covered sports and other business subjects for Forbes Magazine.

When the Wall Street Journal launched Smart Money Magazine in 1993, Liz joined its staff and won a prestigious National Magazine Award for reporting on the insurance industry. She joined Golf Digest in 1995 as one of its few female editors and quickly added the creation and development of a monthly special section aimed at women golfers to her responsibilities. By 1998, she led the launch of Golf Digest Woman and served as its Managing Editor.

In 2002, Liz left journalism and returned to her first love, music. Her daughter began taking piano lessons at a music store in Monroe, Connecticut. But when the owner of the store announced she was closing it, Liz decided she wanted to save the business for the community.

She bought and quickly expanded the business, building a new 5,000-square-foot venue for her Creative Music Center and passionately supporting music education on a local and national level. Liz was elected to the Board of Directors of both the National Association of School Music Dealers (NASMD) and the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM). She relished lobbying on behalf of those organizations in Washington D.C. to support public funding for music education. Her store has been named one of the top 100 music retailers in North America in seven of the last eight years by NAMM.

Through the years, Liz was an avid and active birder and photographer. She was a member of the Audubon Society and worked with several birding societies to track and monitor certain species, including the osprey. Her love of nature led her to make several trips to Thailand in support of the preservation of the native elephants there. And those who knew Liz best remember her enduring bonds with the family's dogs, particularly Emmie.

Liz is survived by her husband, Mike, a sports and entertainment marketing executive in Westport, her daughter, Samantha, and her son, Charlie. She also is survived by her mother, Renee Comte of Redwood Valley, CA, her father, Harry Smallenburg of Burbank, CA, and sister Jessamyn Smallenburg of Royal Oak, Michigan. Her adoptive father, George Comte, died in 1996.

In lieu of flowers, contributions in her memory may be made to The NAMM Foundation and its efforts to advance music education for people of all ages and abilities: www.nammfoundation.org/donate/annualfund OR www.mskcc.convio.net/goto/LizReisman. Please specify to allocate donations to brain cancer research.

There will be no formal funeral. Rather, the family will remember Liz with a private celebration of her life.

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