

◀ SOUTH DENNIS, MA

OBITUARY

Geraldine H. O'Brien

OCTOBER 2, 1946 - DECEMBER 11, 2018

PLAY TRIBUTE MOVIE

Gerri O'Brien passed away unexpectedly on Tuesday, December 11, 2018 at the age of 72. She was the loving wife of Robert P. ("OB") O'Brien, deceased, her husband of 44 years. Gerri was an honor student headed for college when her father passed away when Gerri was 15 years old. She gave up on her dreams of higher education in order to get a job and help support the family. She trained as, and gained employment as a secretary, a profession that eventually brought her to Diplomatic Service for the United States State Department. There she met OB, and together they embarked on careers that spanned the globe. Through her skill and hard work, Gerri ascended through the ranks, ultimately was promoted to commissioned rank of Minister Counselor in the Foreign Service of the United States, a position comparable to a Two-Star General. She was a pioneer in demonstrating strength, intelligence and competence to her coworkers at a time when such talents were not always sought out in women. Gerri dedicated her life to the Foreign Service, serving at embassies around the world. Her posting included challenging assignments. In Beirut, with the embassy under siege and gunfire being exchanged in the surrounding streets, she endured cold showers from a pipe trickling water into the basement, the only source of water for bathing. In Vientiane, Laos, she drove to work with her suitcase packed in the trunk in case the Embassy staff would be forced to flee to Thailand. She and OB assisted the investigation of the bombing of Pan Am 103 in Lockerbie, Scotland, helping to establish a command center for the investigation. She also served in Cairo, Egypt, Ankara, Turkey, and Kuala Lumpur, Malasia, as well as other posts. In 2011 she was awarded the Secretary's Career Achievement Award by the State Department for her 43 years of serving her country around the globe. After retirement Gerri and OB settled on Cape Cod, where Gerri became active in the Village Garden Club of Dennis, serving as

the Vice President, mentoring the new members, and filling the town flower beds with colorful beauty. She hosted wonderful parties where she served delicious food to dozens of close and intimate friends and family members. Her love of plants and flowers, and her love of life, brought joy and happiness to all who knew her. She is survived by her sister Valerie Hennike, and her brothers Ronald and Kelvin Keraga. In lieu of flowers donations can be sent to the Foundation for Peripheral Neuropathy (www.foundationforpn.org) Visiting hours will be held by Doane, Beal and Ames, 729 Route 134, South Dennis, MA from 4-8 p.m. on Tuesday, December 18. A Mass of Christian burial will be held at Our Lady of the Cape, 468 Stony Brook Rd, Brewster, MA on Wednesday December 19 at 11 p.m. burial to follow at Massachusetts National Cemetery in Bourne, MA at 1:15pm. For online condolences, please visit www.doanebealames.com.

FAMILY

Valerie Hennike, Sister

Ronald Keraga, Brother

Kelvin Keraga, Brother

Robert P. ("OB") O'Brien, Husband

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Services

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Burial Wednesday, December 19, 2018

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REMEMBERING

Geraldine H. O'Brien

ALL MEMORIES FROM THE FAMILY

[ADD A MEMORY](#)[SEND FLOWERS](#)**Tom McKeever**

December 22, 2018

I first met OB and Gerri in Beirut in 1978. I was a wet-behind-the-ears DS agent assigned TDY to protect the Ambassador. OB and Gerrie could not have been a better introduction to overseas life for me. Despite living in a war torn city with the highest threat level of any post in the world, Gerrie and OB always emanated a calm poise and confidence. They were Foreign Service to the core in all the best ways. I still fondly remember having dinner at their Beirut apartment and afterwards retiring to their balcony where we talked, drank, and listened to gunfire in the city below until the bottle was emptied! Gerri was a wonderful person as was OB, they will be missed by those lucky enough to have known them both!

Larry Mandel

December 20, 2018

We served with Gerri and OB in our second posting, in London, in the mid-80s. They were both

exceptional — smart, nice, easy to work with and generous with their time and energies. Gerri loved working in Management, where she was terrifically effective, and OB was an uncharacteristically agreeable security officer. They both excelled at demonstrating common sense and great judgement.

We kept up with them periodically over the years, visiting again in New Delhi. Gerri was one of the best — the world is poorer for losing her. I join friends and colleagues all over the world in missing her.

Eileen Brennan

December 19, 2018

My heartfelt condolences are being sent to Gerri's family and friends. I am deeply shocked and saddened by Gerri's passing. I worked with Gerri on her first assignment to London. Gerri was a wonderful boss and was always very supportive to me with both work and personal issues. We were fortunate that Gerri returned for a second tour to London.

May Gerri rest in peace, along with her lovely husband.

Brenda Yarasavage Brogan

December 19, 2018

Gerri was such a bright spot in our family..... so lovely, vibrant, strong and caring. I'll never forget how she adored her mother and they had so much fun together. Her life was a fascinating journey and an inspiration to all. Her death leaves such a huge void, but she will always live on in our hearts and in our memories .

Fly high with the angels, dear cousin!

Joyce Barr

December 19, 2018

Gerri and I met in the mid-90's when we were assigned to the State Department's Operations Center as Senior Watch officers. We hit it off right away! She was very smart, dedicated and understanding, the perfect colleague for a high stress environment. Bullies who depended on bluster and arrogance to get their

way, were usually out maneuvered by Gerri who used humor and common sense to keep the peace. She was the "go to" person for many of us during that assignment. Several years later, I lobbied hard for a highly coveted assignment but wasn't chosen. I was a very unhappy camper. However, when I realized that Gerri was the person selected, my hard feelings evaporated. I couldn't think of a better person for the job. As some have noted, Gerri loved her OB! I was really worried about her after he passed. However, when we talked earlier this year, she clearly missed him but seemed happy; very busy with family, friends, gardening, and entertaining. I was to visit her next year but that was not to be. We lost someone who made life better for those around her and served the US Government and the American people with integrity and distinction. Please accept my condolences on the loss of an exceptional human being.

Janet McGuire

December 18, 2018

I met Gerri and OB in Prince Edward Island. They were connected to the McGuire family of Morell. Gerri was such a gracious and friendly lady. You could not help being swept away with her enthusiasm and cheer. We will miss her. Love, Janet and Lou McGuire

Denise LeBlanc

December 17, 2018

I am so sorry to hear of Gerri's passing, and also to find that my cousin Bobby has gone as well. Although I had not seen them for many years, their kindness both to me and my father will be remembered.

My deepest sympathy,

Denise LeBlanc

Joe and Mary McGuire

December 16, 2018

Sending sympathy to Gerri's family and friends. Thinking of you and remembering her.

Timothy O'Brien

December 15, 2018

I knew of OB as he was a senior officer in Diplomatic Security (and a member of the O'Brien tribe, so I figured he had to be a pretty good guy, lol) but only met Gerri when I was serving in the Operations Center and she was a Senior Watch Officer on one of the other shifts. I'd heard their story of how they met (of course, the Service is so very small in many ways) but had never had the pleasure of meeting her until then. I never forgot her. As smart as OB was, she was that much smarter. As politically savvy as he was, she was more so. They were a perfect combination, a well-matched couple. They looked after others, not just themselves. Gerri took me aside when I received my onward assignment from the Watch and provided clarity for me - because it was a post she and OB had served in. She knew that the post was far more than just the "assignment" and gave me perspective and a broader picture because she knew I was going to need it. They were truly people who thought of others. They complemented each other so very well because of it. And Gerri and OB are together again. I was so sorry to hear of Gerri's passing, and was equally crushed to hear OB had passed, but I know they're sharing joy at being together again.

Ann & Leo Cyr

December 15, 2018

We met Gerri and OB in 1976 in Athens while they were en route to Beirut (we had just been evacuated). Met up with them again while on consultation in DC and then, as so often happens in the Foreign Service, lost touch. But we followed Gerri's rise in the Senior Foreign Service and were so proud of her. We reconnected after OB retired to the Cape. Starting about 8 years ago, visited them every 2 years or so. Always had a great time reminiscing about the people we had met along the way -- and enjoyed lobster dinners and taking OB out to one of his favorite restaurants for a Bento box dinner. We're still in shock but know that this loving, devoted couple are together again in Heaven. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family at this most difficult time. Please know they were loved and respected by so many.

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