



Mrs. Gisela Gallmeister Strand

April 26, 1939 - November 6, 2013

Gisela Gallmeister Strand

November 6, 2013, Holland, Michigan

Gisela was born at the beginning of the 2nd World War II in Hannover, Germany. With her mother Clara and her older brother Horst she was evacuated to rural Bavaria to escape the horrors of war. But when her youngest brother Klaus was born in 1944 Clara needed some rest and Gisela was sent for a few weeks to her grandparents in Hannover. Here she was right in the center of daily bombings and was unable to return to her mother. When her grandparent's apartment was destroyed she could not stay with them any longer and was sent to her aunts for safety. This short term solution lasted for three years, when her father was finally released from POW camp and wanted his family together again. Gisela would have preferred to stay with her aunt, but a child of eight was not asked.

The trauma of the almost daily bombings during the end of the war and the following three years of near starvation were very difficult to shake off but eventually she realized that she was extremely blessed to have survived and that God must have had a reason and a plan for her. Her mother saw to it that she could attend the best girl's school in town so that all the possibilities of life would be open to her. Gisela's interest in languages, history, and opera lead her to the University of Freiburg, the University of Vienna, the University of

Chicago, and to Vanderbilt University where she got her advanced degrees, and finally to Hope College in Holland, Michigan.

And here she found the meaning of her life: a happy marriage, two wonderful and gifted children, Mimi and Alexi, a most amazing career involving the exchange of ideas with her students, for some of whom she had a life changing influence.

When her children started their own careers and families she focused on helping others in the community. She was trained as a Stephen's Minister to accompany members of her parish through difficult periods of their life. She also became a counselor at the Center for Women in Transition. She also volunteered at the local Soup Kitchen until her illness forced her to stay away from bigger crowds.

Her artistic endeavors took her to writing poetry, painting, experimenting with wood carving, developing her shade garden into a living sculpture, and finding solace, inspiration, and joy by interacting with nature, family, and friends.

Extended travels took her all over the world both to urban centers in Japan and China and to beautiful natural paradises: Hawaii, Eastern, Northern, and Southern Europe, the Grand Canyon, and the great expanse of the West.

But the greatest joys of her life were being with her grandchildren Sonia, Rye, and Gabriel, her children Mimi and Alexi, her soul mate Jochen, her family in Germany, especially her brothers, and her friends both here and in Germany. Klaus, her youngest brother, already showed her the way into the next life and she had hoped that they, Klaus and Gisela, her parents, grandparents, aunts, and friends would all be with each other again. "Friends are the flowers in the garden of life."

What a blessed life!

The memorial service will be held at Grace Episcopalian Church in Holland on Saturday November 23rd at 2pm. In lieu of flowers, please contribute to the Land Conservancy of West Michigan. The Strand Family is being served by the Yntema Funeral home, 251 S. State Street, Zeeland MI 49464. www.yntemafh.com

Tribute Wall

MI

“ Dear Gisela, 11 years it has been. We all must die, but it is still hard to say good bye. I was a student of Gisela from 1976 until 1980. In loving memory, Michael

Michael - August 29, 2024 at 11:24 AM



“ Mrs. Gisela Gallmeister Strand

August 31, 2022 at 01:26 PM

TD

“ i felt the need to say that i am so sorry for what you went thropugh and i will pray for you every daay

tnia jones - Ofallon, IL - felt bad that she died - April 24, 2014 at 12:00 AM

JS

“ Frau Strand war ein toller Professorin - klug und nett. Leider zu hören sie hat entschlafen. Frau Strand was a great professor - informed and likable. So sorry to hear she has passed. :(

Johanna Swanson - Ypsilanti, MI - former student - December 14, 2013 at 12:00 AM

DM

“ I was saddened to learn of Dr. Stand's death in the News from Hope. I was a German minor at Hope when she first came to the college and enjoyed her enthusiasm and her spirit. I had no idea of what she had been through in her earlier life, as was so well documented here in her obituary. My condolences to family and loved ones. She was a beam of light in the Hope College community.

Dawn Vollink - Kalamazoo, MI - December 12, 2013 at 12:00 AM

RS

“ Frau Strand was such a delightful professor! Some of my fondest memories from class involved her usual morning entrance into the classroom when she would open the window, in winter-when it was snowing, and cheerfully say, "Frische Luft!" as she would use her hand to encourage more of the cold air to enter the class. My condolences to her family.

Renata Okonkwo - Madison, WI - former student - December 06, 2013 at 12:00 AM

LF

“ I did not meet Gisela until I retired. Since we were both retired educators, we spent time talking about our former careers, about our children and grandchildren, and some of our hopes and fears for the future. She loved teaching. She loved her family even more. Although I've never met any of her family, I can tell you that each of you all were AWESOME in your mother's , grandmother's, great grandmother's heart and mind. She always told about your strengths and had a prayerful heart hoping your best dreams could come true. Part of her dismay in her illness was the dismay she was causing for her family and friends. Jochen, Gisela's soul mate. I told her once that the two of you were fairy tale material - kinda Cinderella - Prince Charming. If only I could find words to describe her smile. After I moved from Holland, Gisela and I shared emails. In one of the last emails I received from her in which she was explaining her many health challenges, she wrote: I WILL not let all of this get me down. I am ALIVE!! hope that Gisela knows that her will to live and her determination to face her challenges has left a lasting impression on many, many people. I feel that I grew as a person from the friendship we shared. Thank you Gisela. You are missed. Lois Welling

Lois Welling - Hinsdale, IL - friend - November 20, 2013 at 12:00 AM

CF

“ I met Gisela when I came to teach a yoga class in Holland more than thirty years ago. We became friends immediately. She opened her heart and home to me and to my three young sons and for years we stayed close visiting back and forth. She shared her warmth, personal openness and philosophical depth. I have so many fond memories of evenings spent at the cottage either talking, doing yoga , swimming, making food or sitting by the piano. We lost touch because of our busy lives, but recently reconnected. I only wish that I had been blessed with more shared time with her. I am so saddened by her passing and can only extend my deepest sympathy to Mimi and Alexi and to your children. Cheryl

Cheryl Tully - Grand rapids, MI - Friend - November 12, 2013 at 12:00 AM

KS

“ I wish to share my sympathies with Frau Strand's family and friends. She was my German professor for several classes at Hope and encouraged me and helped prepare me when I decided to spend a year in Berlin my junior year. It was such a great experience that I treasure to this day. With condolences,

Kristin Timmer

Kristin Timmer - Hudsonville, MI - Former Student - November 12, 2013 at 12:00 AM

SF

“ I loved going to Mimi's house to play as a child. Mrs. Strand would always have treats after school for us, had the best time at there home. I remember Christmas time at the Strands there tree was always so special with the real candles lite, I do remember worried about the real flames from the candle. Sorry to hear of Mrs. Strands passing. I will carry so many great memories being with the Strands. Mimi hope you are doing well.

Sherri (Tubbergen) Kingery - zeeland, mi 49464, MI - Mimi's childhood friend -
November 10, 2013 at 12:00 AM

MF

“ Gisela was a fine person, filled with gentleness and caring, a good sense of humor, and the wish to live a healthy life. She was sensitive to others' feelings and mindful of the need to treat the Earth with consideration. Her death makes me sad. My condolences to her family, especially Mimi and Alexi.

Michael Lakin - Ithaca, NY - friend - November 09, 2013 at 12:00 AM

MF

“ I met Gisela at our water aerobics classes held at Evergreen. That was awhile ago and even then I admired her strong willingness to work hard to keep herself healthy. We were both single and I remember talking of the possibility of having another man in our lives. Then she went to Germany for a relatives wedding. There she met Jochen. When she returned to Michigan there was a special sparkle in her eye. Jochen, I know you brought a great deal of joy into her life! Unfortunately, I did not get to know the rest of her family, although we talked about all of you frequently. Recently another friend, Lois Welling, myself and Gisela set up a three way email conversation. It was a wonderful way to keep in touch. I know she was frightened to face her recent surgery. When Lois and I didn't hear from her we guessed that Our Lord had called her home. I admired her in life and will miss her greatly until one day we meet again. God Bless you all. Martha Woltman

Martha Woltman - Holland - friend - November 09, 2013 at 12:00 AM