

## ***From Chicago to Columbus, Bobbie Levin Never Looked Back***

“You don’t get to choose how you’re going to die. Or when. You can decide how you’re going to live now.”

—*Joan Baez*

Bobbie Levin, who passed away Saturday morning, had many passions in her life—animals of every species and breed and the comfort they bring, the great outdoors, her home on the outskirts of Columbus, the soaring high Cs of Luciano Pavarotti, and the comforting lyrics of Joan Baez.

But she saved half of her heart for horses, whether in the saddle with hunt clubs, teaching kids how to tack up and ride, or just going for leisurely trail rides on Doc, her last steed. She saved the other half of her heart for Mark, her husband of 41 years, with whom she built a life, a summer camp, and a home on ten acres of lush, rolling countryside in the Greater Green Creek community.

Barbara Poole Levin was born February 9, 1944, in Chicago, and graduated from the University of South Carolina – Columbia with a degree in business. But by the time she became a counselor at Camp Green Cove in Tuxedo, North Carolina, she had decidedly left city life behind. It was there that she forged friendships that would endure for a lifetime, such as with Tootie Stoehr and Carla Dimmitt. And it was while working at the camp that she also met Mark, then a counselor at Camp Mondamin, the “brother camp” just up the Green River.

They married on Thanksgiving Day, 1981, on the 66 wooded acres that would become TrailRidge Mountain Camp the following summer. Located in the Buladean community in Mitchell County, the creation of the camp came under the direction of Bobbie while Mark was teaching school. She shepherded a crew of road builders and carpenters, negotiated the intricacies of the electric co-op and health department, kept the books, trained the water program staff, oversaw food service, and ensured everyone got paid—even when she and Mark didn’t.

TrailRidge grew and attracted kids and counselors from 35 states and over a dozen foreign countries before they closed it in 1995 to operate a travel camp.

Bobbie and Mark settled comfortably into life in Columbus. Always engaged, Bobbie either joined or formed book clubs, co-founded an investment club, volunteered with the Girl Scouts, and faithfully abided by the golden words of Matthew 7:12 to “do unto others.”

Later in life, and no longer able to slip her boots into stirrups, she took comfort in being near Doc, her quarter horse, whose home was only yards away from the house. Always a lover of canines and felines, a series of them were constant companions, curled around her feet, like smoke, as she read or watched television.

Two years ago, she moved into the Magnolia Trails unit of LaurelWoods in Columbus, a facility she first discovered years earlier when searching for a place for her late father-in-law, Bob Levin, to reside. The caregivers of LaurelWoods, the skilled staff at nearby St. Luke’s Hospital, and for the last sliver of her life, the caring professionals at Upstate Community Hospice House all became her extended family, doing unto her as she would have done for them.

Bobbie died in the early hours of April 22. She was 79.

In addition to Mark, she is survived by her sisters Pam James of Columbia, South Carolina; and Ginny Mazzetti of Todos Santos, Mexico; nephews, a niece, and the ever-rambunctious Colin, who waits impatiently for her to return home.

In lieu of flowers, Mark asks that you consider a donation to the charity of your choice or especially Forever Dream Senior Dog Sanctuary, P O Box 521, Tryon, NC 28782. A private gathering will be held to honor Bobbie’s memory at a later date.