



## **Carmelisa “Lisa” Castelli Wood**

Lisa (Henschen) Wood, Tempe artist, teacher, mentor and friend, passed to heaven to be reunited with her beloved father on April 26, 2012 at her home in South Tempe.

She was born in Alton, Illinois on June 5, 1949, but her family moved to Phoenix in 1952 for health reasons. She obtained her elementary education at St. Thomas the Apostle Elementary School and graduated from Camelback High School in 1967.

Lisa performed as a singer/dancer in local TV productions, becoming the opening act for Duane Eddy, Wayne Newton, Wallace and Ladmo and the Lew King Ranger Show. Known as ‘Carme

Castelli’, she recorded “Letter to Santa” for Triple A Records at the age of nine. (See YouTube, Carme Castelli). During the studio session, Carme (short for Carmelisa) was told, “Little girls don’t have voices that big – tone it down”. “Ease up a little bit” were words Lisa heard often in her life from friends, relatives and colleagues.

During her senior year at Camelback High School, a close friend suggested they dye their hair blonde and try out for the Pom-Pom line at Phoenix College. They were both selected for the Varsity Pom Line, which presented a dilemma; no one in her family had ever gone to college. She excelled in Art at Phoenix College and was chosen “Queen of Hearts” during her two years at the community college.

Lisa graduated with honors from ASU in 1972 and began a long, successful art teaching career in local school districts. She taught at Mohave Elementary School and subsequently in the Tempe Union High School District. She received a Master’s degree in fine arts from ASU in 1982. Throughout her 25 year teaching career at Tempe, she was on the faculty at Tempe High, McClintock, Marcos de Niza and Corona Del Sol High Schools. She was honored with the Arizona State Art Educator of the Year in 1979. She also received a Tempe Diablos Teacher of the Year Award while on staff at Corona Del Sol High School. Her long teaching career produced artists, art educators and professional artists in all areas of the industry. If you stayed in an art class with Mrs. (Henschen) Wood past mid-term, you had an affinity for hard work and the talent to produce the high standards Lisa demanded. Her students annually won high awards at the Arizona State Fair, the Shirmer Gallery, Tempe Sister Cities and High School Art Competitions. Her former students have kept in touch and it was not uncommon for her to receive an email from Manhattan, New Orleans or San Francisco, for advice on this color or that media, from a former student.

On July 7, 2007, Lisa married local dentist, Fred Wood and blended their two families into one, with four grown children and four subsequent grandchildren. Drew Henschen (Stephanie) with sons Walter and Henry, Lauren Henschen, Nick Wood (Melissa) with children William and Vanessa, and Danielle Wood.

Lisa also taught aerobics, Pilates and yoga for over thirty years at LA fitness and Mountainside gymnasiums. She took great pride in introducing herself as the “oldest aerobics instructor in Arizona.” Lisa was one of the original members of St. Andrew Catholic Church and also attended the 1st United Methodist Church with her husband, Fred. Lisa was known to say, “God may not be ready for me; I’m bombastic and confrontational, but She’ll learn to adapt!” Carmelisa was prayed over after her passing, surrounded by people who loved her.

Her funeral service will be held at St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church at 3450 W. Ray Road on Saturday, May 5, 2012 at 11:30am. Immediately following the service there will be a celebration of her life and her art at Fred and Lisa’s home in South Tempe. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Coronal Del Sol High School’s Art Department.