

Deborah DeGrasse Abraham



Deborah DeGrasse Abraham, age 59, passed away Saturday, May 28, 2011, after battling the pain of ongoing depression.

Memorials: Though she favored charities focused on animals and the elderly (e.g. Straydog Inc., and Meals on Wheels, to name but two of many) friends, family, acquaintances and those reading this obituary may honor her memory, and the memory of lost loved ones, by donating to a charity of your choice or by simply committing a random act of kindness. Deborah was born in New York and spent her childhood as an "Army brat," a life she embraced and loved. She graduated from Putnam City West High School in Oklahoma City, Okla., and attended Oklahoma State University where she received both her undergraduate and graduate degrees. She then embarked on a 30-year career in the federal government where she held positions with the Department of Justice, Bureau of Prisons, U.S. Office of Personnel Management, U.S. Department of Commerce, Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Transportation, Inspector General, and The United States Department of Agriculture, Risk Management Agency. Though she held other positions, her primary occupation, and her professional passion, was that of an investigator. She retired from public service in early May of this year. Though her professional career was impressive, it was Deb's love and passion towards her family, friends, animals, the elderly and the most vulnerable among us that defined her as a person. That love and that passion were beyond measure. Whether

saving a wounded owl on the roadside, adopting and providing loving care to any number of furry friends throughout her life, reaching out to a friend in need or distress, or simply spending time with a resident at a nursing home, she always found time for people and animals and understood how those relationships made us whole. Her gift to all of us was showing how much capacity the human heart has for giving. Her legacy is all the lives she touched and those lives (both two- and four-footed) that will be touched because of the impact she had on her friends and acquaintances. She was preceded in death by her brother, Robert (retired from the U.S. Navy); father, retired U.S. Army Col. Robert Abraham; and mother, Alice Ristine Abraham, who also served our country as an Army flight nurse in the Southwest Pacific theater during World War II. Deborah was fiercely proud of their service to our country, and all three are interred in Arlington National Cemetery. I love you my darling. I wished you could have stayed, and I will always wish I could have saved you. I know you are safe, no longer in pain, and loved. Until I can again embrace you, I, too, will honor your memory with my eternal love; a commitment to our furry kids you leave behind; and with acts of kindness for as long as I am able. Survivors: Her husband, Robert W. Gawel of Colleyville; in-laws, Robert and Mary Gawel of Poquoson, Va.; and sisters-in-law, Susan Hyatt of Greensboro, N.C., and Karen Gawel of Hampton, Va. She will be remembered by countless friends from coast to coast who loved her dearly and will carry with them fond memories of her life and time spent with her.

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