



Gwendolyn C. Birchenough

May 15, 1926 - March 18, 2026

Our beloved mother, grandmother, mother-in-law, aunt and friend, Gwen Birchenough, has peacefully passed on. Never wanting to miss anything, she took her time, reaching nearly 100 years on Earth.

Born Gwendolyn Clark Bentley on May 15, 1926 to Jim and Kitty Bentley, Gwen lived in many places until she finally reached Skaneateles as a young teen, where she felt at home for the first time. Except for a decade in Asheville, NC, she lived in Skaneateles the rest of her life, weaving her unique vitality into the community she loved while championing causes she believed in. The revival of the Barrow Art Gallery, the Everson Museum, support of The Skaneateles Festival and The Carrie Lazarus Fund for Extraordinary Talent represent just a handful of Gwen's interests that have benefitted from her enthusiastic attention.

Gwen graduated in Fashion Design from Finch College in NYC. She married Bill Birchenough in 1946. They were married 70 years, until his passing in 2016. They had two children, Dave (Carrie Lazarus) Birchenough and Katie (Greg Cumberland) Birchenough and generously shared their home with dear nieces, nephews, cousins and friends from near and far. Even more than her love of the arts and travel, Gwen reveled in her two grandchildren, Sam and Estella. She encouraged their interests and cherished any opportunity to be with them.

We feel gratitude for the good care of Finger Lakes Center for Living in Auburn, NY. Gwen died there on March 18, 2026. At heart, she saw herself as a sailor. So Mom, now that you've pulled up anchor, we wish you fair winds over the horizon.

A Celebration of Life will happen at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, donations in memory of Gwen may be made to The Barrow Art Gallery, 49 E Genesee Street Skaneateles, NY 13152, online at www.barrowgallery.org/donate or The Skaneateles Festival, 97 E. Genesee St., Skaneateles, NY 13152, online at <https://skanfest.org/donate-2>

Please sign her guestbook at www.BLBUSH.com

Tribute Wall

KW

“ In honor of my dear sweet friend, Gwen. I am so privileged to have called you friend. We met at my World Market store in Asheville, NC. At least once monthly, you would stop by to wander the store. I would bring you hot tea half way around, usually in the living room section. “Where the comfy chairs are”. Sometimes you would take a quick nap, and then we would continue our stroll. In addition to you making my work days better, I will forever cherish our lunch dates in Biltmore Park as well as listening to your stories of adventurous travel all over the world, while visiting you and your precious apartment above the jewelry store, right in the middle of all the action. I know you loved it there. I will forever be thankful for your daughter for stopping by my store to tell me you had moved back to NY. I also hope you were able to listen to all the msgs I left for you after you moved. My husband and I are finally living our full time rv life that I told you about. We made it to upstate NY and to the fingerlake region. It is every bit as beautiful as you had described. Thank you for being my friend. I will continue to remember and cherish our friendship, always. As I know how many birthdays you had celebrated, I did from time to time check obituaries. I just checked today because I know what milestone birthday was going to happen next week. Happy heavenly birthday, Gwen. How lucky are we to have had you in our lives for 99 years!



Kristie White - May 06 at 08:11 PM

SH

“ Gwen was a member of St James Church. I will always treasure her positive attitudes and comments. Please accept my deepest sympathy at this fragile time.

Suzanne Hutchinson - March 26 at 06:08 AM

DH

“ Sweet Gwen. She will be missed at FLCL. Gwen was a table mate of my Mom's. Sounds like she had a very happy, full life. My sympathy to all her family.

Donna Halverson - March 25 at 08:10 AM

EW

“ Gwen sat in front of us at St. James Episcopal Church in the 1990s and 2000s. She was a wonderful, loving and generous person who happily put up with my three small boys while they tried to behave properly in church. I will always be grateful for her beautiful smile and words of support and kindness.

Ellen Gilmore Wilson - March 23 at 11:52 AM

KB

Mom had a great affinity for small boys and their antics so I'm sure she cherished this time. Thank you for such a sweet memory.

Katie Birchenough - March 24 at 11:00 PM

CW

“ We moved to Skaneateles in 1978 and bought the house across the street from Bill and Gwen. We became friends immediately and enjoyed many years of friendship - Barrow Art Gallery, Leisure Hour Club among them. She was a great community leader.

Charles and Nancy Williams - March 22 at 05:23 PM

KB

Mom and Dad always spoke so fondly of you both. I'n glad you had that time together and such a good neighbor-relationship!

Katie Birchenough - March 24 at 11:00 PM

MG

“Gwen and I became acquainted around the year 2005. It was instant affection and respect. We did a lot of things together, had wonderful conversations. Far too infrequently, we visited and hugged each other across a pillow at Finger Lakes. I treasure the memory of her great smile almost as soon as she saw me. Then, we hugged. The memory remains a precious gift. Mary Gardner

mary I gardner - March 22 at 01:50 PM

KB

Dear Mary, Mom cherished her friendship and always looked forward to connecting with you. I'm so glad you have such a sweet memory of her.

Katie Birchenough - March 24 at 10:59 PM

GH

“What a lovely human. Gwen and I had a good time, as I catered many teas and book club meetings. Gwen had such a sound way about most everything. And giggle and laugh. Absolutely loved her. May she rest in peace. Gwen Holbein

Gwendolyn F HOLBEIN - March 22 at 01:08 PM

KB

And you share the name Gwen! So glad you enjoyed her, Gwen!

Katie Birchenough - March 24 at 10:57 PM

MW

“What a sweet heart...I loved her giggle. A truly wonderful soul...you surely will be missed Gwen...xoxMartha Williams

Martha Williams - March 21 at 04:59 PM

KB

Thank you, Martha. Glad you got to know her giggle!

Katie Birchenough - March 24 at 10:58 PM