



### **Mary Ward Manley, 67, of New Haven**

NEW HAVEN – Mary Ward Manley, 67 passed away peacefully at home on February 15, 2024, after a year’s progression of ALS. Her loving family was at home by her side. Through her diagnosis and disease, she remained steadfast in her positive outlook on life, enjoying it with a smile and her usual strong will, never asking why.

Born April 15, 1956 in Summit, New Jersey to Thomas E. Ward, Jr. and Margaret Sater Ward. Mary graduated from Kent Place School and Wheaton College. In 1980 she earned a Master of Arts in Museum Education degree from George Washington University. Shortly after graduation she made the move south, assuming the position of Curator of Education at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts in Alabama. It was there she met Michael, her adoring husband of 38 years. They married in 1985 and relocated to Atlanta, Georgia, where she served as the Associate Head of Adult Programs and Docent Coordinator at the High Museum of Art.

Mary and Michael made the move north to New Haven, Vermont in 1998, to be closer to her parents and enjoy New England’s four seasons. She was thrilled when she discovered the Henry Sheldon Museum and learned they were hiring. Two months after her arrival, she had the job. Mary applied her knowledge and passion wholeheartedly to the Henry Sheldon Museum, holding several titles over the course of her 25 years there. She retired in May of 2023 as the Associate Director. In her years at the Sheldon, she was loved and respected by generations of trustees, staff, volunteers, and a wide circle of members and visitors.

To know Mary was to know one of the most caring, compassionate, strong-willed, patient, loyal, and selfless people in the world. She was a loving wife, mother, and grandmother. She loved her family near and far, and greatly enjoyed having her two sons and their partners live close by. A joyous spirit, she lit up rooms with her presence, creativity, laughter, and smile. She was a

thread that connected so many people through family, work, and friendships. Mary was also generous with her time, volunteering with the Bristol Friends of the Arts and the Middlebury College Museum of Art. She sought out several charitable causes over the years, supporting the arts and humanities.

Mary is survived by her husband, Michael Manley; two sons, Hunt Manley and partner Sage Horsey of Starksboro, and Will Manley and wife Katie Wooten of South Burlington; one grandchild, Beau; five nieces and nephews; two brothers, Tom Ward and wife Katherine Babbott of Thetford, and Scott Ward of Boston, Massachusetts. She was predeceased by her brother-in-law, Jeffrey Manley of Montgomery, Alabama; and parents, Tom and Peg Ward of Weybridge, Vermont.

A celebration of Mary's life will be scheduled for the spring, in May or June, around the same time her award-winning garlic crop sends up scapes. Details will be shared at a later date.

In lieu of sending flowers, please consider a donation in Mary's memory to the Henry Sheldon Museum's Annual Fund ([henrysheldonmuseum.org/annualfund](http://henrysheldonmuseum.org/annualfund)), or Addison County Home Health and Hospice ([achhh.org/memorial-gifts](http://achhh.org/memorial-gifts)).

The Manley Family would like to thank the many family members, friends, and neighbors who provided loving support through this time; Addison County Home Health and Hospice, for their superior level of compassion and care; as well as Elijah W. Stommel, MD, PhD at Dartmouth–Hitchcock Medical Center.