

Shirley Lorraine Wakefield

November 20, 1934 - January 31, 2021

Shirley Lorraine (Fitzsimonds) Wakefield was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She graduated valedictorian of Wauwatosa High School in 1953. She later was honored on the school's Wall of Inspiration for her extraordinary achievements.

She received a BS in Chemistry from the University of Wisconsin and a PhD in Physical Chemistry from the University of Cincinnati. In 1976, she received an MBA from Xavier University and was granted her Professional Engineering License. Her distinguished career in engineering spanned a quarter of a century. She was a pioneer in her field.

Shirley began her career at Avco Electronics and from 1973 to 1994 worked as a project manager for General Electric Aircraft Engine Division, head of this area with a team of men reporting to her, as she was delighted to note all her life. The notable projects she headed included stealth technology for the B-1 bomber. Shirley lived a total of 29 years in Wisconsin and for 32 years in Cincinnati, Ohio before moving to Florida with her husband.

Family and friends were far more important to Shirley than career. She and her beloved husband, Robert Albert, were married for 57 years. They were the parents of two children, Diana and Richard. Through the years, times with children and grandchildren were precious.

Shirley and Bob began international travel in 1982. It was a passion that would take them to a total of 125 countries through the years. They had a rich and active social life, often hosting and attending social gatherings. They were also avid golfers and bridge players, and Shirley was active in the West Orange Women's Group and at Oakland Presbyterian Church. Her daughter has said that Shirley is well-described in the words of the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 13, where he wrote, "Now abide these three, faith, hope and love, and the greatest of these is love."

Shirley was predeceased by her son in 2008 and by her husband in 2014. She is survived by her daughter, Diana M. Merrell of Winter Park, FL, a niece and nephew, her four grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be given in Shirley's honor to: *Morning Star School* (for special needs children): 930 Leigh Avenue, Orlando, FL 32804, or to *Bishop Grady Villas* (for special needs adults): 410 Bishop Grady Court, St. Cloud, FL 34769