

# In Memoriam—Judy Cocci Vachon Rogers '64

**She saw beauty in everything**

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Tuesday, November 18, 2014

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Her parents named her for Judy Garland, their favorite movie star, but to everyone else she was always “Bubsy.” Italian on her father’s side, Judy Rogers fondly recalled childhood Sundays that included huge pots of homemade pasta and sauce shared with her large, extended family.

Rogers was always athletic and “very much a go-getter” says her son Brent Vachon. She worked as a high school physical education teacher before becoming the first female director of a YMCA when she was selected to head the organization’s facility in Leominster, Mass.

In the 1970s Rogers was at the forefront of the movement to introduce infants to the water and was recognized in the book *Your Baby Can Swim* by fitness pioneer Bonnie Prudden. She later became founder and administrator of the Bonnie Prudden School of Physical Fitness and Myotherapy in Stockbridge, Mass. With her second husband, David Rogers, Judy trained many exercise therapists in myotherapy, a system of pain relief involving manipulation of specific trigger points.

Making a career change 19 years ago, the couple opened Art in Green, a landscaping firm in Brewster, Mass. Their own home, surrounded by lush lawns and gardens, was often the site of fundraising events.

“Judy was all about finding the beauty in everything,” says David. “She believed it was one of the reasons we are put on this earth.” Before she and David married, Rogers offered her large home as a safe house for battered women. Along with meeting their practical needs, she brought beauty into the women’s lives by helping them choose attractive clothes at the local thrift shop. When her father died, Rogers shocked her traditional Italian relatives, first by insisting on being a pallbearer, and then by not wearing black. Instead, she wore a fuchsia dress and a picture hat to the funeral, explaining that rather than mourning, she chose to celebrate the beauty of her father’s life.

Rogers enjoyed the creative process, says her son Craig Vachon, remembering stories she wrote, recipes she developed, and crafts she fashioned from odds and ends. Among her creations are a number of whimsical sculptures made from recycled materials, says David. “Our home is filled with eclectic Judy.”

She also conceived the idea for dancing garden mirrors, tiny double-sided mirrors strung between transparent fishing wires. Manufactured on Cape Cod by local artisans, the mirrors are sold across the country and internationally.

Happiest in her garden, Rogers loved being outside with pruning shears in her hands. As her Parkinson’s disease, diagnosed in 1999, progressed, her husband converted empty whiskey barrels into miniature gardens that she could easily reach.

Last spring, during what they both knew would be their final visit, Craig asked his mother how she would like to be memorialized at her funeral. “Say that I lived without regrets,” she said. “That I loved to laugh and dance and swim and sing. That I cherished the life I led.”

Rogers died on May 17, shortly after pruning her flowers one last time.

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