



## Patricia Ballard Kelly

January 21, 1946 - January 1, 2018

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Patricia Ballard Kelly, aka Patty, PBK or, what I liked most to call her these last few years: "The PK," slipped out of this magical life, on New Year's Day, 2018 in the morning. In the moment of the phone call that relayed the news of her passing; never, have I wanted more, to turn back the clock an hour or two. No moment has ever felt more final and devastating than this one. We hadn't finished evolving together. Though she was not a traditional mom, she was a major, larger than life character for more than one place and person in this world. She grew up in a neighborhood in Miami Beach, spent summers in Birney, MT living the dude ranch life with her mom, and ultimately made her life in the small town of Big Horn, Wyoming. She made lifelong friends and had two little girls, born in 71 and 72. Since her passing, we likely all would like one more conversation, one more visit, one more hug or even one more flash of her feisty eyes with a twist of her mouth and the bold opinion weighted therein.... just one more moment with mom...

Mom spent the last 4 years or so battling some complications with her health and ultimately agreed to move to Salt Lake for her care. The day I called mom to tell her that we found a care center where she and Mia Kitty (her feline "partner" of 5.5 years) could live together in a "condo," she told me she was "dancing around the room in her head." She could not at that point dance on her own two feet.

The PK was always making plans to get back home to her ranch in Wyoming where she could pull weeds and look out at her back yard. She had a way of seeing her "whole life in front of her" even through her very last days. While she qualified for and benefited from 24 hour assistance and care, she saw herself as very independent.

Mom was born in January of 1946 in Miami Beach, FL to Mary Elizabeth Ballard and John Patrick Kelly. She lived a carefree, wild child, golden life in her youth attending St. Pats Catholic School in Miami Beach. Her independent mother had laid down roots in Big Horn

WY with the purchase of a little ranch in 1959; found for them by close friends and dude ranch brothers from Birney, Montana. She and her mom traveled west from FL every summer. They were horse women. Mom was the Sheridan County Rodeo Queen in 1967, and as I understand, it was back in the day when Queens were chosen by the “applausometer” as contestants made a galloping lap around the arena.

She met and married Dale Lassiter, had two daughters, and tried to settle in; but I don't think being married suited her. Mom loved her independence and freedom. She loved what Frank Sinatra sang boldly in 1968 “I did it my way.” She made it known to more than one person that she wanted it “played at her funeral” and since she lived up to it, we'll honor this request at a celebration of life in the summer at her ranch in WY.

She was generous with her time and had been known to occasionally claim only two things in life as her ultimate responsibility; both of whom survive her. Her eldest daughter, Mary, lives in Salt Lake City, Utah. Her youngest daughter, Kim, resides on the ranch in Big Horn, Wyoming. We will both do our very best to honor her, and live out our lives in a world that is truly a little less unique than it was, just a few days ago.

I would like to thank the Millcreek Wentworth staff members who cared for her, brought her endless cups of ice and coke, root beer or juice, painted her nails, opened the door for her after her outings on the smoking porch or just generally took time to laugh with her or exchange a story. Renew Hospice folks were there every day as well for the past year or so and helped make sense of “it all” during what ultimately became the end of life moments. Thank you.

If you wish to remember our PK in any way, please, in lieu of flowers, send your donation in her name to either of two charities that speaks to you.

The Elephant Sanctuary in Tennessee  
PO Box 393  
Hohenwald, TN 38462

Or

The Dog and Cat Shelter in Wyoming  
84 East Ridge Road  
Sheridan, Wyoming 82801

We will remember mom always. We will plan a celebration of her life in the early summer

of 2018 at her ranch in Wyoming. Date TBA. Important conversations led us to understand her wishes for cremation, and more importantly mini celebrations where we could sprinkle her ashes in several special places. We will look forward to mini celebrations throughout 2018 around the United States; Wyoming, Florida islands and beaches, Utah, Tennessee and ultimately Indiana where the majority of her ashes will lay to rest next to her mom and grandparents.

# Comments

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“ My deepest sympathies to the children of Patty Ballard Kelly, and to their families.

I'm Wayne Ferguson, an 83 year old that has wonderful, warm memories of the Ballard Family from many years ago. I began my banking career at the former French Lick State Bank in French Lick, Indiana...and remember handling banking transaction so often, as a "Teller", in the 1957-59 era. Our Bank was Trustee of the Ballard Trusts at that time. On January 1, 1959, the French Lick State Bank & the West Baden National Bank merged, becoming the Springs Valley National (later Springs Valley Bank & Trust Company. I became the Manager of the Trust Department around 1979 and continued in that position until leaving the banking career in 1984 to go into the Insurance & Real Estate Business.

During my time as Sr. VP & Trust Officer, I had occasion to travel to the Branch Ranch @ Big Horn, Wyoming, (owned by the Ballard Trust) to do the routine "visit", and was so impressed with the facilities...just an ideal place to relax & enjoy life to the fullest! I'm not certain of the Ranch Manager's name, but believe it was Dan Blaney, and he was just such a super, reliable gentleman, whom we relied on so much in managing the operation end of the Ranch.

During my earlier years in banking, I had the pleasure of meeting and talking with Mary Ballard Kelly (Mother of "Patty Ballard Kelly") many times...as well as also meeting and talking with her brother, Charles "Chad" Ballard, quite often.

Wonderful memories of this wonderful family that had their roots here in our little community of French Lick & West Baden, Indiana. It was an honor and a blessing to have had the privilege of knowing the Ballard Family, and of serving them via their banking services back in those some 35 to 40 years ago.

**Wayne Ferguson** - November 21, 2020 at 04:57 PM

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“ I feel a unique sadness finding this post. I have been wondering where she was and now in quarantine I had time to do some research. I made friends with Patty when we made a journey of a lifetime on safari in Africa. We were in a close group. We found out her Miami Beach home was outside my back door. After that she came to visit me every year in her convertible with her dogs and cats hanging out the windows. I always looked forward to that visit. She always had an open invitation for me to the ranch in Big Horn. I regret I never took her up on it. She loved animals with a true passion. She used to tell me she would surprise her kids and leave all her money to animals. She was a feisty woman and it complimented me that she made friends with me. I loved her bravado. This obituary is written so eloquently. So nice to see. I will never forget Patty. This is one of the pictures I had of the group in Africa. There is no picture of us together. In love and light I honor her memory.



Laney Rada - April 18, 2020 at 10:26 PM

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“ I met “The PK” three times, the third time was more interesting. My Jeep was loaded with all of my belongings and she drive up next to me somewhere in Wyoming. Patty said I had to see who had so much junk in their car. I realized it was my best and wonderful friends mother. We stopped for lunch and had a great time. Mary, call me!

trudy - January 11, 2019 at 01:40 PM

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“ Dani PAdovano sent a virtual gift in memory of Patricia Ballard Kelly



Dani PAdovano - May 10, 2018 at 05:55 PM



“ Hello, We never got a chance to meet your mom and are saddened to hear of her passing. We are from Windmill Village in Fla and have been trying to reach her but the email we had for her does not work so we found this site trying to research how to contact the LLC the property was listed under. Could you please contact me.

Dani PAdovano - May 10, 2018 at 05:57 PM