

## Gail Burner Olmstead

JUNE 17, 1935 – MAY 28, 2026

Gail Burner Olmstead was born on June 17, 1935 in Plainfield, New Jersey and lived an incredible life across nine decades. She was the beloved mother of three daughters, grandmother of five grandchildren, and friend to everyone she met. Gail passed away on May 28, 2026 after a brief illness.

Her happy childhood included many friendships and school activities, a passion for books about horses (and comically scary adventures with the real thing), attending NY Giants and Brooklyn Dodgers games and Broadway shows, and a short career on Plainfield's synchronized swim team. In 1953, Gail headed to Ohio for college (graduating from The Ohio State University) where she met her future husband, Freeman Bruce Olmstead, noting that she immediately liked him because he made her laugh. After their wedding in December, 1957, the new couple headed to Bainbridge, Georgia for Flight School and the beginning of their life in the United States Air Force.



In January, 1961, Gail and Bruce were hosted at the White House by President and Mrs. Kennedy to mark Bruce and a fellow crew member's return from the USSR as prisoners in the Cold War (RB-47 shootdown incident). Life magazine shared Gail's anxious wait for Bruce's return through a photo essay (December 19, 1960).

While Bruce climbed the ranks in the USAF, the family moved 17 times making dear friends at each post due in large part to Gail's ability to quickly connect to others. Their last post was at the U.S. Embassy in Copenhagen, Denmark where Gail worked in the Consulate's Office and Bruce served as Air Attaché.

A constant through many of those USAF years was 'The Cottage' on Keuka Lake, one of the Finger Lakes in Upstate New York. Whether they were stationed in Ohio, Alabama, Denmark, or Maryland, many happy weeks each summer were enjoyed with family and friends while Gail and Bruce applied their energies and expertise to the maintenance and beautification of The Cottage.

Upon Bruce's retirement at the rank of colonel, they moved to Annapolis where they enjoyed the beauty and history of the city and their wonderful friends and neighbors.

Gail became active in several arts organizations, most notably the Art Committee of the Friends of Quiet Waters Park. In addition to her tireless leadership and volunteering,

Gail was an accomplished weaver and active member of the Chesapeake Weavers guild. She was involved in P.E.O. throughout her adult life and cherished her P.E.O. sisters. For more than 35 years, she was a mainstay of a vibrant book group where meals and lively discussions were shared each month. Gail was always up for a new challenge and enjoyed travel and cultural outings.

She was a devoted mother and grandmother and is survived by her daughter Karen (Brian) Busek and grandchildren Sarah Mackenzie, Katherine (Alex) Harleen, Lincoln Busek, Charles Page, and Margaret (Humza) Rizvi. She was preceded in death by her beloved husband Bruce, daughters Karel Page and Elizabeth Mackenzie, parents Stan and Marion Burner, and brother Bruce Burner.

A Celebration of Life is planned for September 13, 2026 (11 am to 1 pm) at the Sassafrass Pavillion of Quiet Waters Park 600 Quiet Waters Park Rd, Annapolis, MD 21403.

The family suggests gifts in her memory to:

- Friends of Quiet Waters Park (600 Quiet Waters Park Road, Annapolis, MD, 21403 or <https://fgwp.org/make-a-payment/>(please indicate 'Memorial Gift for Gail Olmstead' in the line for Other in the Purpose of Payment section);
- the Maryland Food Bank (<https://secure.mdfoodbank.org/a/tribute>); or
- the cause of your choice.