



Holly Hays Wilhelm

May 16, 1959 - June 15, 2025

Holly Hays Wilhelm passed away peacefully on June 15, 2025 at the age of 66 at her home on Lake Tyler surrounded by love, leaving behind a legacy of compassion, creativity and connection that will live on in the hearts of all who knew and loved her.

Holly was born on May 16, 1959 in Lubbock, Texas and was the daughter of James R. “Jim” Hays and Harriett Harris Hays. She grew up in Tyler, Texas and graduated from Robert E. Lee High School in 1977 where she participated in Southern Belles, choir and theater. During high school she was part of the children’s theater lead by Utah Grounds called The Student Players.

Holly’s array of talents were endless and she was a natural light in every room she entered – always greeting people with her signature, “Hey beautiful”. Whether she knew you for a moment or a lifetime, you felt seen, welcomed and loved in her presence.

Aside from being a trained vocalist and a stage talent she was a very accomplished artist. Her passion for the arts ran deep. A Native Texan who has lived and traveled all over the world, Holly has been nourished and mentored in visual and performing arts since her earliest memory. She has worked professionally as an artist in multiple mediums and performed on

stage since she was eight years old. Holly worked her way through college at Southern Methodist University (SMU) painting and singing as she earned her undergraduate degree in Political Science. She graduated from SMU in 1981. While at SMU Holly was a member of Kappa Alpha Theta sorority.

Holly had the honor of working in the White House during President Reagan's re-election campaign in 1984 as a member of his Advance Team. After his re-election she worked in Washington D.C. on the inaugural committee until the inauguration ceremony was completed in January of 1985.

Holly's first job with IBM launched her career in high tech and Product Development for Fortune 100 companies, with a couple of detours to build her own art, design, event and decorating companies. Holly found wonderful and rewarding ways to incorporate her talents for the arts in her corporate life through design, product launches, web and graphic designs and marketing. She has performed professionally as a vocal artist and in theater and has also worked as a studio artist and design professional for over 40 years. Through her business, Tyler Covington Arts, she showcased creativity, encouraged artists and brought beauty into the community with her marketing savvy and unmatched energy.

During her years of working and living in Denver, Colorado Holly served on the Board of Directors for the Denver Civic Theater. Denver is also where she met and married Bob Wilhelm in 1995. Both of them were successful executives in the technology sector. They shared a rare and beautiful love story – one that inspired everyone around them. Their bond was unshakable, a true partnership filled with laughter, music, golf and unwavering support for one another. After Bob's passing in November 2024, Holly carried his memory with grace and strength, a testament to the depth of their connection.

In 2006 she and Bob purchased a lake house on Lake Tyler and after much

nudging, Holly talked Bob into moving to the lake fulltime when they retired in 2019. They loved their beautiful spot on the lake and enjoyed entertaining family there.

Once back in Tyler, Holly quickly got involved in her community. She was a gifted member of the choir at Marvin Methodist Church where her voice added harmony and spirit to countless services. Holly was a member and Past President of the alumnae chapter of Kappa Alpha Theta, a member and Past President of the Marion Wilcox Junior Garden Club. She also served on the Board of Directors of the Tyler Civic Theater and participated in several productions. Holly was also a member of the Palette of Roses Art League and Willow Brook Country Club where she enjoyed golf and tennis. Holly cherished the friendships she made at her Wednesday Mah Jongg group.

In 2022 Holly was a featured artist with the Art Alley project which is sponsored by City of Tyler Main Street. Artists from all over submit their concept of a proposed mural and only forty artists are chosen by a panel of judges. Holly was one of the artists chosen to be a part of this project where a public alley close to the downtown Tyler square is transformed with a beautiful display of murals. Holly's 12' x 18' mural will remain in place until Spring of 2026.

Holly made everything she touched more vibrant – from her music and marketing work to her countless hours of volunteerism across Tyler. She never sought recognition, but her impact was immeasurable. She will be deeply missed by her family and all those who were blessed to have known her.

Holly is preceded in death by her parents; and her husband, Robert L. “Bob” Wilhelm.

She is survived by brother, Brian J. Hays and wife Denise of Cypress, Texas; niece, Lacey Hope Callaway of Lake Charles, Louisiana; nephew, Dillon Reed Hays of Lake Charles, Louisiana; great-niece Carli Callaway of Lake Charles, Louisiana; and many loving cousins.

The family wishes to thank Holly's wonderful caregivers, Nancy James and Baronica Craver who showed such love and compassion these past few months. A special thank you to Holly's dear friend and doctor, Dr. Julia Hwang, who helped Holly navigate through her health challenges. Memorials may be made to the Tyler Civic Theater, 400 Rose Park Drive, Tyler, Texas 75702.

The family will hold a visitation only that will take place on Saturday, July 12 at 4 p.m. at Stewart Family Funeral Home, 7525 Old Jacksonville Highway, Tyler, Texas.

Previous Events

Visitation/Reception

JUL 12. 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM (CT)

Stewart Family Funeral Home Hospitality Room
7525 Old Jacksonville Hwy
Tyler, TX 75703

Tribute Wall



“ Stewart Family Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Holly Hays Wilhelm



Stewart Family Funeral Home - July 10, 2025 at 02:55 PM



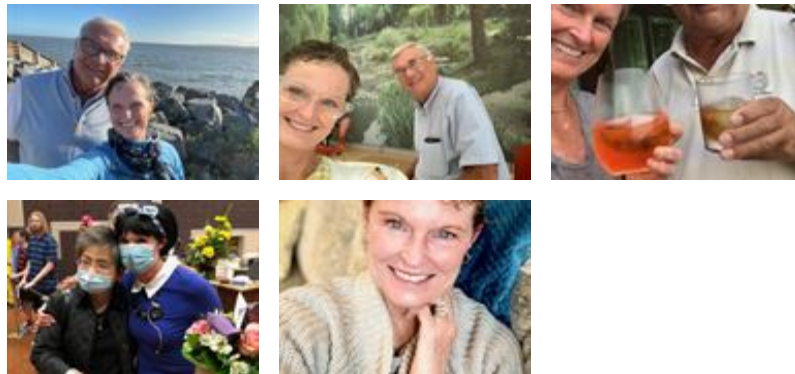
“ Holley Howard lit a candle in memory of Holly Hays Wilhelm



Holley Howard - July 10, 2025 at 05:29 PM



“ 105 files added to the album LifeTributes



Stewart Family Funeral Home - July 10, 2025 at 02:19 PM

BE

“ Bill Eaton purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Holly Hays Wilhelm.



Bill Eaton - July 10, 2025 at 02:01 PM

BE

“ Bill Eaton planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Holly Hays Wilhelm.

Bill Eaton - July 10, 2025 at 02:01 PM

LB

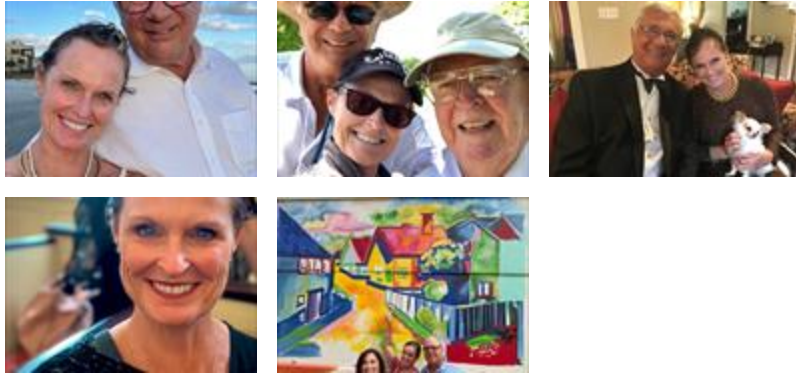
“ Leslie Blake lit a candle in memory of Holly Hays Wilhelm



Leslie Blake - July 09, 2025 at 03:28 PM

LB

“ 15 files added to the album Holly



Leslie Blake - July 09, 2025 at 03:05 PM

KU

“ Kelley Uzzell lit a candle in memory of Holly Hays Wilhelm



Kelley Uzzell - July 06, 2025 at 11:25 AM

SB

“ I only knew Holly for a few years, but I always greeted her with my "Suzy Bruce Hug". She always told me I gave the best hugs! I loved her and her beautiful voice and spirit! I will miss her so much! RIP my dear friend!

Suzy Bruce - July 01, 2025 at 12:51 PM

CJ

“ I knew Holly through the Palette of Roses Art League. When we met we found out we had a lot in common including both of our beginnings in Lubbock. We loved Lake Tyler, animals and of course art. We did not get as much time as I would have liked as Holly was met with some challenges at the time we got acquainted. She was a positive light and a beautiful person. I'm so glad she has her beautiful art as a legacy for us to keep as a reminder of her beauty.
Christie Joy

christie joy - June 25, 2025 at 01:11 PM



“ I will always remember Holly's friendly smile and laugh. She was a wonderful person and will be missed. Cindy Cox

Cindy Gorman - June 24, 2025 at 05:46 PM

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“ I was very happy to have cared for Ms Holly, She was very dear to me and one of the most loved women I know. May she rest in heavenly peace with her dear love ones ❤️🙏❤️ RIP Holly
Nancy

Alger James (Nancy) - June 21, 2025 at 10:02 AM