

'First Lady' of Christian writers' conference dies

Written by Eric Tiansay
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Eleonore Forder, co-founder of the American Christian Writers (ACW), died Thursday, Jan. 24 at home in Nashville after being diagnosed with terminal cervical cancer last month.

"A hospice caregiver and I were with her when she passed," said Reg Forder, her husband who co-founded ACW in 1988. "There was no struggle. She slipped away peacefully when she simply stopped breathing. We were married almost 30 years, and she was just a few days short of her 68th birthday."

Two days after Christmas, Forder was diagnosed with cancer.

"They said it was so advanced that there was nothing they could do for her," Reg said. "So they sent her home for myself and hospice to care for in her final three weeks. It happened that I took her to Florida for most of December, and told her I would give her a vacation she would always remember. We went on two cruises—she loved those—along with some other things she always considered special.

"Although confined to her bed knowing she only had a couple weeks left, she phoned many members of the family and friends to say goodbye, and tell them she loved them," he added. "She was very much at peace through this, but she knew I was having a hard time with it. The only times I saw her cry was out of concern for me after she was gone."

Forder was referred to as the "First Lady" of the ACW conferences for the past 25 years.

"Over that time, the ACW family grew into the thousands, and she loved every one of them," said Reg, noting that the writers group now has chapters in 31 states and holds conferences nationwide. "Her comment after every conference was, 'Wow! Those were the nicest people.' "

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Since the Forders have no family in Nashville, there will not be a funeral service.

"We both agreed years ago on cremation," Reg said. "We will have a private memorial service later this year in Canada, where most of our kinfolks live. I will continue with ACW, but it won't be easy without her by my side. She was my princess. I thank God for this special gift that He gave me to enjoy over the last three decades."