



## Hugh I. MacGillis

April 20, 2020

On April 20, 2020 Hugh MacGillis of West Hartford travelled on from his wonderful, quirky, earthy life filled with his quick wit and unfailing love and acceptance of those he met along the way.

Hugh was well known and respected as a social worker at the Village for Families and Children and June 13th, 2001 was proclaimed “Hugh MacGillis Day” in the state of CT in recognition of his dedication and commitment to mental health care for children.

That same compassion and love was shown to his wife Susan Ritz, sons Peter and Daniel MacGillis, daughter Rachel Moore and her husband Chris, and Hugh’s beloved grandchildren, Mac and Cam Moore, who often provided him with sweet treats and in return were bestowed with kisses to the tops of their heads. This love was reflected back by his family with unceasing care during the end stages of his 35 year dance with Parkinson’s disease.

Hugh was the driving force behind weekly Sunday dinners at his childhood home on Sedgwick Road with his twin sister Ann MacGillis, sisters Christine MacGillis and Jane Kimball and her husband Lewis, brother Donald MacGillis and his wife Ingrid, sister in law Luz Falcon and her husband Thomas MacGillis, who is with Hugh on the other shore with their parents Hugh and Dorothea MacGillis.

Hugh’s colorful life included driving through all 48 contiguous United States in a Volkswagen pop up camper, attending the Poor People's March in Washington D.C. with MLK, and spending the night in ‘the big house’ after protesting discriminatory housing practices in the South End of Hartford. He loved Christmas, Provincetown, the Sunken Garden Poetry Festival, Big Reds, UConn Husky basketball and the Boston Celtics--when they won. Rachel cherished times practicing synchronized swimming and doing “Laps for Leukemia” with her dad at Simsbury Farms. Dan loved caring for his dad and sharing long talks while watching cowboy movies and giving him snacks. Pete remembers fondly their driveway basketball games and in the later years, as they both got older and creakier, walks around the block.

The family is grateful for his wonderful caregivers Betty, Hajara, Hawa, Luz, Sam, and Franny who he always seemed to charm into getting him ice cream, extra bagels and adventures at The Auto Show, the Humane Society, and Elizabeth Park. Hugh enjoyed

many yearly vacations with his lifelong friends Geoff and Linda and in recent years was touched by the deep kindness of his sister and brother in law Shelley and Ken, friend Marybeth, neighbor Sue, and Dave Thomas of St. James Episcopal Church. His first wife Bobbi MacGillis remained a lifelong family friend.

Donations in Hugh's memory may be sent to the Village for Families and Children, Development Office, 1680 Albany Avenue, Hartford CT 06105, or online at [www.villages.org/give](http://www.villages.org/give). A memorial service and party celebrating Hugh's life will be held at a later date. Please notify the family if you wish to participate. For online condolences, please visit [www.taylorandmodeenconnecticut.com](http://www.taylorandmodeenconnecticut.com).

# Comments

---



“ Please accept my deepest condolences.

One memory that had repeated itself, was at the beginning of the night - and there was the handshake. For years, he caused a genuine smile and laugh when he "complained" about my hand shake being too strong. It is my belief that NBA stars watched film of Hugh's hook shot. Hugh's hook shot, nor, his gentle kind demeanor, can be replicated.

I have never met anyone that has been easier to be fond of. A gentleman with class and a huge heart. He had a unique gentleness to him.

I will miss him greatly and cherish the memories i have.

**Nicholas Kimball** - May 19 at 12:39 PM



“ Nick, thank you for this lovely tribute to your uncle. He was very fond of you and your brothers and always looked forward to seeing you. Let's hope one of the Celtics picked up his hook shot for next season!

**Susan Ritz** - May 21 at 03:50 PM



“ I first met Hugh MacGillis when I joined him, in 1971, on the social work staff at Child and Family Services. He was a genial, friendly and skilled child and family therapist (as well as a popular basketball clinician!). Getting to know Hugh also meant being close to his family and their circle of friends. My wife, Nuala, joins me in extending our love and remembrances to Ann, Donald, Tommy, Christine, and the many others who made us feel so welcomed.

We would appreciate learning when there are plans for remembrances -- thank you.

Michael Dunne

**Michael Dunne** - May 06 at 01:57 PM



“ Thanks Mike and Nuala. Given how much Hugh loved parties we will definitely have one to remember him and let you know when it is planned.

**Susan Ritz** - May 10 at 01:40 PM



“ Remembering all the fun we had when we were neighbors. My deepest sympathy to you Susan and Danny.

Wally Schrass

**Walter Schrass Jr** - May 04 at 03:08 PM



“ Thanks Wally.

**Susan Ritz** - May 10 at 01:36 PM

---



“ Hugh MacGillis was my supervisor and mentor at the Village for Families and Children. We continued to remain friends even after I left the Village and moved to Boston. Hugh was one of the kindest and gentlest people on Earth and I feel very fortunate to have crossed paths with him. My whole family knew him well and have fond memories of him. When my son was 5 years old, Hugh taught him to dribble a basketball! I am happy that we were part of Hugh's 70th birthday celebration. I will always cherish my memories of Hugh and remember him as a compassionate, gentle soul with a great sense of humor.  
My heartfelt condolences to his dear wife Susan and his children.



**Lakhimi Chivukula** - May 03 at 11:39 AM



“ Lahkimi, Hugh so enjoyed working with you and the friendship you had over the years. I am glad you got to talk to him recently. Thanks for all the kindness you showed us both over the years. Susan

**Susan Ritz** - May 10 at 01:35 PM

---



“ I worked with Hugh and also knew him from physical therapy. He was a very gentle soul. My deepest sympathy to your family.

Best Regard,

Kam Perrotti

**Kam Perrotti** - April 27 at 12:11 PM



“ Thank you Kam for your kind words. Susan

**Susan Ritz** - May 10 at 01:31 PM

---



“ Susan, it was my great pleasure to get to know Hugh while I was the Associate Director at the Village for Children and Families. Hugh was always upbeat and really cared for his clients. It has been my good fortune over the years to run into Hugh either in West Hartford or at the West Farms Mall. He continued to be a pleasure to be with even as his chronic illness became more challenging. He is definitely a loss to all who knew him. I pray that all of you can find support through the love and caring of your family and friends.

I would like to know when a memorial service is planned. Thank you.

**Chet Brodnicki** - April 26 at 05:39 PM



“ Thank you for your kind words Chet. I remember seeing you with Hugh and it was always a nice reminder of The Village. Hugh really loved working there and also cherished his relationships with so many colleagues. I will keep you posted when we can have a service to celebrate Hugh.

**Susan Ritz** - April 27 at 10:09 AM

---



“ Susan my thoughts and prayers are with you and your family during this difficult time.  
With sympathy,  
Mary Ann Molendini

**Mary Ann Molendini** - April 25 at 04:01 PM



“ Thanks Mary Ann.

**Susan Ritz** - April 25 at 06:37 PM

---



“ Hugh was such a gentle soul and good friend to Ken and me. One of my fondest memories is traveling by car cross country with him in the early 70's; I was in the midst of my "addiction" to Dairy Queen ice cream cones and he indulged that need by stopping at a Dairy Queen in virtually every state we drove through! He was one of a kind...RIP dear friend. Claire Tehan Ravizza

**claire tehan ravizza** - April 23 at 02:05 PM



“ Claire thank you for sharing your memories of my dear husband. He talked fondly of his many trips cross country.

**Susan Ritz** - April 25 at 06:35 PM