

Notes~

The HeART of the Doula with Erica Brookings

OBITUARY INSPIRATION: Carol Rhoad Bass

Painter, sculptor, author, and spirited lover of family, friends, color, poetry, animals, and nature, Carol Rhoad Bass died peacefully in Pownal on July 31, 2024, in the small timber-frame home she shared with Bob Newton, her longtime companion and partner.

As she passed, she was surrounded by the family, art, books, verses, and brilliant hues she considered as essential to her life as air and water. Her beloved cat, Sappho, also sat vigil during Carol's final weeks, alternately hunting and snoozing, and despite importing the lingering essence of a months-old skunk encounter and the occasional deer tick, was provided by Carol a prime spot on her bed.

Carol was born on Dec. 15, 1948, in Columbia, S.C., to schoolteacher and organist, Louise Goodman Rhoad and magistrate Francis Marion Rhoad and raised in the small railroad town of Bamberg. She attended Bamberg schools and studied art at the University of Georgia.

Shortly afterward, she headed north to Mount Desert Island, Maine, with three friends from UGA, where she met Peter Bass of Wilton, with whom she raised three children in Northeast Harbor and then Wilton and Yarmouth. The two joked that the UGA foursome would rather have gone abroad, but far-distant Maine seemed a less-expensive equivalent with just slightly less of a language barrier. Together, Peter and Carol founded and co-owned Maine Cottage Furniture.

In Yarmouth, Carol met Bob Newton, with whom she spent the remainder of her life. They moved back to South Carolina for nearly a decade, and then back to Maine. Bob lovingly indulged Carol's desire to explore the back roads of South Carolina and Maine and they co-created three spectacular houses together. As multiple sclerosis took its inexorable toll on Carol, Bob cared for her with deep commitment and compassion.

Carol was the kind of person who loved swimming in the rain, who pulled her car over to move turtles out of the road, and who never wanted to

come inside from the outdoors. As an artist and person, she was kinetic, her mind and body always exploring and open to delight. She made her kids fragrant apple pies instead of cakes for their birthdays and always proposed drinking water and riding bicycles as the solution to any malady.

In her art she was prolific, daring, and fearless, and the woods, rivers, coastlines, and birdcalls of South Carolina and Maine were among her many muses. As MS slowed her body, her mind quickened. Her most intense and vibrant works of art came in recent years.

Wherever she lived, Carol assembled communities of artists and thinkers to share ideas and ask questions, co-hosting art shows and conversation circles. She was eternally curious and brought that out in others. She was comfortable living in wonder and possibility and not having all of the answers. She often used her art to advocate for the natural environment and once brought copies of her book, "Ripple Effect", a collection of poems, stories, photographs, and paintings about rivers and waterways, to every member of the South Carolina legislature.

Carol's family remembers her with profound gratitude because of the blessings she so generously spread: her easy laughter, her quick smile, her relentless encouragement, her boundless heart, her fierce love, her gushing colors, and her loving guidance.

Her family asks that you remember her by taking quiet time each day to be in nature and observe wild birds and flowers, to think of her while riding, walking, or running with the wind in your hair and sun on your face, or while breast-stroking at your favorite swimming hole or ocean cove. She loved curling up with a hot cup of tea and a good book or enjoying a cold gin and tonic with lots of lime on a hot summer afternoon with friends. She would want all of us to make time every day to create—knit, paint, build, sew, throw, write—and give away our work to friends.

Thoughts on Forgiveness:

When we undertake the practice of forgiveness we find a portal to grace. A window to acceptance. We find at the core of every heartbreak, every betrayal, every event that we feel victimized by, every person we feel has harmed us, and every person we feel we may have harmed, that what we truly have been seeking is forgiveness of ourselves.

~ From the Alchemy of Forgiveness



If I have harmed anyone in any way either knowingly or unknowingly through my own confusions I ask their forgiveness.

If anyone has harmed me in any way either knowingly or unknowingly through their own confusions I forgive them.

And if there is a situation I am not yet ready to forgive I forgive myself for that.

For all the ways that I harm myself, negate, doubt, belittle myself, judge or be unkind to myself through my own confusions I forgive myself.

Forgiveness means giving up all thoughts for a better past.

~ A Buddhist Prayer for Forgiveness

Self Care Checklist:

Physical:

- Exercise 1 2 3 4 5
- Nutrition 1 2 3 4 5
- Play without Guilt 1 2 3 4 5
- Daily Mindfulness 1 2 3 4 5
- Energy Level for Activities 1 2 3 4 5
- Water intake 1 2 3 4 5
- I am Well Rested 1 2 3 4 5

Spirit:

- Life has Value, Meaning, Direction 1 2 3 4 5
- I have a Spiritual Connection 1 2 3 4 5
- I Know How to Create Balance 1 2 3 4 5
- I Trust My Intuition 1 2 3 4 5
- I Know How to Feel Connected 1 2 3 4 5
- I Know I Make a Difference 1 2 3 4 5

Emotional:

- I Recognize My Own Feelings 1 2 3 4 5
- I have a Non-Judgemental Attitude 1 2 3 4 5
- I Express my Feelings 1 2 3 4 5
- I Listen to and Respect other's Feelings 1 2 3 4 5
- I feel Part of my Family 1 2 3 4 5

Relationships:

- I share my Opinions and Feelings 1 2 3 4 5
- Create and Participate in Healthy Relationships 1 2 3 4 5
- Balance Between Work and Play 1 2 3 4 5
- I clearly express my needs 1 2 3 4 5
- I am honest with people 1 2 3 4 5
- I focus on Positive Relationships 1 2 3 4 5

Choices:

- I Follow Through on Decisions 1 2 3 4 5
- I Manage my Time to meet my Personal Goals 1 2 3 4 5
- I take Healthy Risks 1 2 3 4 5
- I Accept Circumstances Beyond my Control 1 2 3 4 5
- I Don't Take on More than I can Handle 1 2 3 4 5

Self Care ~ Continued Reading

[Self-Care Is Not An Indulgence. It's A Discipline.](#)

[Developing Your Self-Care Plan - University at Buffalo School of Social Work](#)

~

Ted Talk video~ Alua Arthur on
Why Thinking About Death Helps You Live a
Bettter Life

 Why Thinking About Death Helps You Live a Better Life | Alua Arthur | TED