

## JOANNE SMOLENS

Joanne was a 1974 graduate of Melrose High School. She was active in every Drama Club production throughout her high school career and was elected President of the Drama Club in her junior year. Joanne appeared in "Blithe Spirit" at the high school, and also worked on the production crew of "The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man In The Moon Marigolds" which made the finals of the State Drama Competition in 1972. Her contributions to the Drama Club were limitless -- whether behind the scenes or on stage.

Additionally, Joanne was a member of the Glee Club and the smaller Ensemble. She appeared in three musical productions: "Guys and Dolls", "Bye Bye Birdie", and "The Sound of Music" in which she had the role of the Baroness.

Other high school activities included: literary staff member of the "Log", "Imprint" staff member, and "Thistle" (literary magazine) staff member. When she was a sophomore, she and several other high school and college students formed a singing group and performed music from "Godspell" at churches in the Greater Boston area.

Joanne attended University of Massachusetts where she majored in English and graduated with a teaching certificate in 1978. She did her student teaching at Amherst Regional High School and also assisted students with several high school productions including "The Music Man." In the summer between her junior and senior years, she studied Shakespearean and Jacobean drama at Oxford University in England.

As she had finished all of her course work at the end of the first semester of her senior year, she came back to Melrose and did some substitute teaching at the Junior and Senior High Schools. She enjoyed being back at Melrose High, on equal footing with her former teachers. After college graduation in May 1978, Joanne was hired to teach in Franklin, New Hampshire. She taught seventh, eighth and ninth grade Reading and acted as faculty advisor to the year book staff. While living in Franklin, she was the recipient of the Professional Businesswoman of the Year award and competed in the state finals in the spring of 1979.

In the winter of 1980, Joanne became ill and was diagnosed with leukemia. She resigned her teaching position in the spring and moved back to Boston.

Joanne went to work at Chomerics, a high-tech firm, in Woburn, MA. She was the Marketing Literature and Sales Leads Coordinator. This was very different from her teaching experiences but she found the work challenging and rewarding. She discovered that she thoroughly enjoyed the world of business. Joanne developed her department from a one and a half person operation into a three and a half person operation which she managed.

After a two and a half year period of remission, Joanne's cancer returned. An experimental treatment proved unsuccessful, and she died in July 1984.

Joanne was an incredibly outgoing, vivacious, and talented young woman. Her spirit was indomitable, even after she became ill. Joanne's sparkle and wit were a constant source of joy and amusement for family, friends, and colleagues. In addition to her love of theater and music, Joanne wrote poetry, was a gifted calligrapher, enjoyed sculpting, silkscreening, painting, and politics. She often said that her high school years were the most enjoyable of her life. She knew everyone -- students and faculty alike. For these reasons, my parents and I (her sister) decided to set up a scholarship in Joanne's memory for a student at Melrose High who shows enthusiasm and a strong interest in drama/theater arts and music.

We wish you the best of luck in your college endeavors.

Sincerely,

*The Smolens Family*

The Smolens Family