



Celebrating

THE LIFE OF



LINDA PIERCE ALTON
March 21, 1945 – June 2, 2025



Linda was born in Long Beach, California, in 1945 to Captain Robert and Oralea Pierce. Linda lived a life rooted in purpose and global community. She attended the University of California, Berkeley, where she earned both her B.A. and M.A. between 1963 and 1970. During her time at Berkeley, she served as editor of the Berkeley Yearbook and was the class valedictorian. It was also there that she met and married fellow student Dick Alton, with whom she shared a chapter of her life and the joy of raising two daughters.

Deeply engaged in the social movements of her era, Linda was an active voice in the Free Speech Movement and the anti-Vietnam War resistance. Her lifelong commitment to justice and human dignity began at Berkeley and never wavered.

Early in her career, Linda traveled with Dick to Harlem, where they worked in storefront schools helping high school students who had dropped out find their way back to education and hope. It was there that they encountered the Ecumenical Institute, a global organization committed to human development and community service. Linda joined its staff in San Francisco in 1970, marking the start of a profound journey in international service.

In 1976, Linda, Dick, and their young daughter, Christina, moved to the Philippines, where Linda co-directed a USAID-funded community development initiative through the newly formed Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA). Her work focused on supporting women's small businesses—strengthening families, building local economies, and sparking grassroots transformation.

Her passion for justice and empowerment then took her to Kenya, where her second daughter, Kay, was born. Together with a team of 150 local staff, Linda and her family lived and worked in both rural villages and urban slums, helping shape development efforts that reached thousands across the country.

Linda later served as Program Director at ICA's global headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, where she brought her insight, compassion, and leadership to an international stage.

While living in Brussels, Linda and Dick divorced. She met and connected with her loving partner, Lynne Larsen, while participating in Dr. Jean Houston's work. Eventually, she and Lynne made their home in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where Linda continued her work as a lead technical trainer and convenor with The Minnesota Technology of Participation (ToP) until her retirement.

Linda and Lynne, "the loves of each other's lives," were married the first day that same sex marriages were legal. R.T. Ryback, the Mayor of Minneapolis, married them on August 1, 2016, at the court house in front of cheering friends and family. For the first time in their lives they wore matching outfits and as they came down the stairs, someone called out "Here Come The Twins".

Linda and Lynne loved their time together. They had fun camping in the Black Hills, Yellowstone, Gooseberry Falls, MN, many State and County Camping Areas in Minnesota. Sometimes camping with the families in Lyndale Neighborhood and elsewhere. They took Lynne's 99 year old mother on one of those community camping events and rented a cabin on Lake Superior with Linda's mother. All in all, wearing out a variety of tents, 3 pop up campers, a Yellow Tab, a Volkswagen bus and finally a Toyota Camper Van.

Linda, with her very own home in Minneapolis, became a dedicated gardener, loving the first opportunity to plan, dig and plant various flowers and hostas in her corner lot. She and Lynne hosted many Halloween gatherings with sloppy joes for trick or treaters. They were moms to many cats. They were dedicated fans of the Minnesota LYNX. They were active members of the informal neighborhood group, Creative Aging in Place, where they built strong social bonds that carried them through thick and thin.

Linda's life was a testament to what is possible when courage meets compassion. She will be remembered not only for the global impact of her work, but for her fierce moral clarity, unwavering empathy, and the countless lives she touched with grace and generosity.

She is survived by her loving wife of nearly 40 years, Lynne Larsen; her daughters, Christina and Katherine (Kay) Alton; her beloved grandson, Wyatt Wren; her sister, Lori; her brother, Ron; her former husband and dear friend, Dick Alton, their three loved cats, Stanley, Punkin and Poco; and many friends and facilitator colleagues. Linda and Lynne moved into a new house with Lynne's daughter, Andrea, and her family, all of whom provided excellent support and comfort to Linda over the last year.



Celebrate

Piano Prelude

Maureen Armstrong, Pianist

Welcome and Introductions

Eva Jensen & Rebecca Gilgen

Presentation of Flowers

Laura Johansson & Representatives

Song - "Woyaya" (We Keep Going) Ghanian Origin

One Voice Mixed Chorus

Poem - *Bridging* by Marge Piercy

Lynne Larsen with Nancy Lee

Remembering Mom

Christina Alton

Kay Alton

Musical Interlude

Maureen Armstrong, Pianist

Remembering Linda Alton

Dick Alton, ICA

Marilyn Oyler, ToP

Poem - *To Be of Use* by Marge Piercy


Lynne Larsen with Irina Fursman

Song - "Won't You Be My Neighbor"

Cindy Skrien & Attendees

Blessing, Closing & Transition

Eva Jensen & Rebecca Gilgen



July 26, 2015

10:00 a.m.

**First Unitarian Society
900 Mt. Curve Avenue
Minneapolis, Minnesota**

Officiants: Eva Jensen & Rebecca Gilgen

Recollections: Christina Alton, Lynne Larsen, Kay Alton,
Dick Alton, & Marilyn Oyler

Pianist: Maureen Armstrong

Singing: One Voice Mixed Chorus, Cindy Skrien

Readers: Irina Fursman, Nancy Lee

Celebration Planning Team: Christina Alton, Lynne Larsen, Laura Johansson,
Catherine Jordan, Eva Jensen, & Rebecca Gilgen

Photography: Joanna Kohler

Sound: Jacob Mullis

Slide Show Photo Montage: Planning Team

Reception: FUS Alliance, Joyce Blomquist, Karla Hill-Donisch and Brigid Riley

Flowers: Wendy Farrar and Patricia Meegan

Volunteers: Many Friends – Thank You!

Memorials: Please do an intentional act of kindness in Linda's honor.

**Please join the family for a joyful reception following
the service downstairs with more stories, music, and group dance
and snacks and beverages**