

Beth Goldsmith Zinman

East Lansing, Michigan

Beth Goldsmith Zinman, age 69, died on Friday, February 14, after a long struggle with breast cancer. Throughout her illness, she displayed remarkable courage and grace. She also maintained her high-spirited sense of humor and delight in the absurd.

She is survived by her mother, Ruth Goldsmith (Hanover, NH); her husband of 47 years, M. Richard Zinman (University Distinguished Professor, James Madison College, Michigan State University); her sons, Jonathan Zinman (professor of economics at Dartmouth) and Gregory Zinman (professor of film and media at Georgia Tech); her daughters-in-law, Mary Coffey (professor of art history, Dartmouth) and Lauren Klein (professor of literature and media, Georgia Tech); her grandchildren, Elias, Ella, Irena, and Loie, and many treasured friends. She was preceded in death by her father, Martin Goldsmith. Her family was the center of her life and she was a wonderful daughter, wife, mother, and grandmother.

Beth was born on October 11, 1944 and grew up in Far Rockaway, a beach community in New York City. She was educated at Russell Sage College (class of '66), where she majored in history, graduated at the top of her class, and was elected president of the student body; and at Michigan State University, where she earned an M.A. in history (1977). From 1966 to 1969, she taught high school history in southern California. During her first years in East Lansing, she co-authored and edited (with Julie Paynter) a privately published guide to academic opportunities for minority students; and co-founded (with Marilyn Frost and Julie Paynter) Women Organized for Employment (WOE), an institution devoted to improving employment opportunities at MSU for faculty partners. In 1978, she became an academic specialist-advisor at MSU, working first in the pre-professional advising center in the College of Natural Science, then in the Department of Political Science, and finally in the Honors College. In 1995, she was honored by the National Academic Advising Association for her outstanding work as an academic advisor. She retired in 2005 as Senior Specialist-Advisor Emeritus.

Beth loved reading good fiction, designing and tending her garden, collecting pottery, visiting the Leelanau Peninsula, idling in the Cotswolds, Provence, and Tuscany, and rooting for the Spartans.

Over the course of her illness, she received excellent care from Dr. Daniel Hayes, Dr. Michelle Riba, Ms. Lita Smith, and Ms. Megan Williams at the University of Michigan's Comprehensive Cancer Center and, most recently, from Ms. Joan Traptin of Hospice Advantage. She and her family also received extraordinary support from her small army of friends. Her family would like to thank all of these people for their generosity, kindness, and love.

At Beth's wish, there will be no funeral. Instead, there will a memorial celebration at MSU in the early spring or early fall. Details will be announced as soon as possible.

Also at Beth's wish, in lieu of flowers, contributions can be made in her memory to the Leelanau Conservancy (105 1st St. Leland, MI 49645) or to [James Madison College](#), MSU (Case Hall, 842 Chestnut Rd., East Lansing, MI 48825).