



Mrs. Fern Dian Chapin-Agostini

May 11, 2015

Fern Dian Chapin-Agostini, January 12, 1941- May 11, 2015. Fern was born in Fall River, Massachusetts and grew up in Harvard MA, where she graduated high school at the Bromfield School. Fern later lived in Northampton, MA, where she was a Girl Scout Troop leader, ran a popular home day care, and was a respected member of the community.

In 1973, Fern moved to Florida. There she opened an alternative pre-school, Learning Space, which she operated for several years. Fern maintained relationships with parents and children from Learning Space throughout her life. After selling Learning Space, Fern became the director, and later an administrator, for Hillsborough Child Council Rainbow Centers , an affiliation that lasted 23 years. She made great contributions to this innovative program, and was profiled in the Tampa Tribune.

While working full time, Fern graduated with a BA in Human Development from Eckerd College , and a Master's degree in Social Work from USF – Tampa. Ultimately, she became an LCSW and opened her own counseling practice. It was in her own practice that Fern blossomed; she took great pride in her work as therapist, and many people attribute the healing of their relationships and families to the help Fern lovingly and tirelessly provided. Although she worked more than most people, even working while receiving chemotherapy for her cancer, Fern still found time to develop other skills and hobbies. Over the years, she was a painter, a potter, a sailor, a scuba diver, and in her last years, an avid golfer. Fern excelled at anything she tried her

hand at, from art to sports—the one exception might be singing. But she loved music and would not hesitate to sing off key to any song on the radio—she knew them all, no matter the genre or decade.

In addition, she loved travel and adventure, and in her lifetime visited cities around the U.S., as well as South America, Central America, and Spain. Her family and friends could always depend on her returning with stories that would knock them to the ground with laughter. Fern never lost her sense of humor; it sustained both her and her loved ones (and her doctors!) through her long and difficult illness.

Above all, Fern had great generosity, and there was always room for one more family member in her home. We have a joke, that if you're in, you're in—never mind break ups, divorce, moving away—once you are part of Fern's family, it's for life. And she gave generously to her family, helping with everything from diapers to dance lessons to iphones to trips to Disney World. It was precisely because of Fern's enthusiasm and generosity that holidays at her home, particularly Christmas, were such spectacles—we were beyond blessed every year, as Fern gathered family and friends, grownups and children, to a living room that looked like Santa had tipped his whole sleigh there, and a table of food worthy of any great chef serving a party of hundreds.

Fern is survived by so many who loved her. Most especially, though, by her loving and devoted husband, Glenn Agostini; her children, Heather Jones, Mark Jones, Holly Oakes, and Dean Jones (and wife Kelsey), foster son Erick Feliciano, and step daughter Kerri Agostini Drain (and husband Jay); her grandchildren, Grier Gay, Violet Gay, Abigail Oakes, Brooke Jones (and Brooke's mother Robin Jones, brother Brandon Gallo, his wife Heather, and their children Mia and Morgan), Carson Oakes, Mikaela Drain, MaKenzie Drain, Sage Jones, Asher Jones, MaKenna Rose Drain, Gabriel Jones, and Roman Jones; and by her great granddaughter, Eris Babel. She is also survived by her sisters, Robin and Lynn. The family will receive friends on Friday, May 29 at 3:00 P.M. with reflections at 3:30 P.M. at Hopewell Funeral

Home, 6005 CR 39 S, Plant City. Expressions of condolence at [www.Hopewell
Funeral.com](http://www.HopewellFuneral.com).

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

MAY 29. 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM (ET)

Hopewell Funeral Home
6005 County Road 39 South
Plant City, FL 33567
(813) 737-3128
office@hopewellfuneral.com
<http://www.hopewellfuneral.com>

Tribute Wall



“ Hopewell Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Mrs. Fern Dian Chapin-Agostini



Hopewell Funeral Home - May 15, 2015 at 05:50 PM



“ Fern, I'm sorry and sad I missed you the last 7 years of my life and I'm having to right this only to find out of your passing! I can only imagine you gardening and planting flowers in His kingdom looking down on us! I saw you almost everyday next to my office on Busch Blvd and you always said Hello with a smile! You also were there for me during a hard time in my life and helped me! I was seeking you now not for me but one of my boys going thru a hard spot! He (my son) was little and was there when our dog gave birth to a litter and later you took one, the fat one! I know you took great care of the dog! RIP Fern you did a great job on earth! Felix

Felix Figueruelo - December 05, 2017 at 10:40 AM



“ Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Mrs. Fern Dian Chapin-Agostini.



May 29, 2015 at 09:57 AM

JF

“ *Jeb & Brenda Ferebee purchased the Spring Has Sprung Mixed Basket for the family of Mrs. Fern Dian Chapin-Agostini.*



Jeb & Brenda Ferebee - May 29, 2015 at 09:18 AM

NF

“ *Naomi Kimmel & Sam Freeman purchased the Florist Choice Bouquet for the family of Mrs. Fern Dian Chapin-Agostini.*



Naomi Kimmel & Sam Freeman - May 28, 2015 at 12:40 PM



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Mrs. Fern Dian Chapin-Agostini.*



May 27, 2015 at 06:15 PM



“ *Secret Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Mrs. Fern Dian Chapin-Agostini.*



May 25, 2015 at 11:04 AM

GM

“*Fern was, and continues to be, an awesome Spirit that will remain with all her loved ones forever. My family and I were lucky to have Fern in our lives in the 70s when we were all involved in the Bokononist Players Theater Group. What a very special space in time that was, with long hours of hard work and great fun. Fern's energy was contagious, as was her laughter and commitment to whatever was the task. Her Learning Center was a Godsend to me and our youngest son, Renick, who thrived there under her and her staff's guidance, and I was able to work with Fern during the summer taking the older kids to fun places like the beach at Fort Desota Park. Our oldest son, Jason, was privileged to be part of the theater group, and both boys were constantly in the midst of creative, caring, and fun adults. Heather used to "babysit" the two boys from time to time, and I remember Jason always getting his nose out of joint, as Heather was only a few years older than him. He'd say, "I don't need no babysitter!" Secret was, I think he always had a crush on Heather! I'll never forget the time we "rat-sat" for Heather's pet rat when the family went out of town. I told her, okay, but I was not thrilled about it. By the time they got back, we were all somewhat in love with that rat! Since that time period, we've not been in touch with Fern, but FaceBook put us back in touch with Heather, and through her, in touch with news of Fern and the family. Such sad news came of Fern's illness, and now of her passing. Our hearts go out to all of her sweet family. Her presence was so bright that its absence at this time leaves a huge chasm for each of you. Know that much love comes your way, and hopefully find some peace in knowing how much Fern blessed the lives of so many. Love to you all, Gail Marsh*

Gail Marsh - May 22, 2015 at 01:35 PM

AL

“*Fern was a constant presence in my life for too many years to count. As Holly's best friend, I was "adopted" as family and had the pleasure of sharing many of the huge family gatherings held at her home over the years. My favorite memories of Fern were during these times, surrounded by her loved ones, which included cherished friends along with extended family. She opened her doors and her heart, especially to those who she felt needed a little extra love and compassion. I will always remember her wry sense of humor and infectious laugh.*

Alex Lange - May 22, 2015 at 12:00 PM



“*Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Mrs. Fern Dian Chapin-Agostini.*



May 17, 2015 at 10:31 PM

DC

“*I am so sorry to hear of Fern's passing. I also met her during the production of Cuckoo's Nest. My boyfriend at the time played McMurphy, and he and Fern had many a lively exchanges! I was an unemployed teacher at the time and also ended up working at Learning Space. We had many great times during that period and some epic parties! Fern was always so much fun, and I met wonderful people through Learning Space thanks to Fern. I'm sure she will be missed by family and friends and I wish I had gotten to see her again.*

Darryln Caudill - May 17, 2015 at 01:24 PM

 Mark
Axley

“ *The first time I saw Fern was when she was performing the role of Nurse Ratchet in the Bokononist Players production of One Flew Over the Cuckoo's nest in Tampa. We met her and the cast after the show. I'm not sure of the sequence of events, whether I knew she owned The Learning Space before or after that performance. But at some point soon afterwards I suggested to Bonta that we put Melanie into The Learning Space. Bonita's reaction surprised me, she said that she was not going to entrust her child to "Nurse Ratchet"! Needless to say we did enroll Melanie and shortly afterwards I became a teacher there. I enjoyed working with kids, but couldn't make enough to support Bonita and Melanie, even with Bonita's salary from Tampa General. So I reluctantly fell back into the Auto Parts business. The next 20 years were filled with fun and adventure. We became close friends with Fern and her wonderful kids and we spent many weekends together on camping trips. When we moved to Jacksonville, Fern and family would travel to Jacksonville and we spent many weekends experimentally with a blender and various frozen concoctions. Relocating to Kissimmee, Fern, Glen and crew would weekend with us at our many pool parties. It wasn't until we moved to Michigan that we sort of fell out of touch, but were reunited again when we moved back to Tampa. It is difficult for me to remember a time in my life when Fern was not a part of it. She was bigger than life and was generous to a fault. My life is fuller and richer for having known Fern. I am proud to call her friend. Fern you will be missed, I love you so very much.*

Mark Axley - May 17, 2015 at 12:10 PM

DB

“ To Ferns Family,
I saw Fern for 12 years.. she tried to fire me after the first 5 years telling me I no longer needed therapy but I told her I needed her..she was a great conversationalist, confidant, friend and every minute I was with her or on the phone with her I felt LOVED. She got me through some rough stuff and I am so healthy now it is all because of the work she MADE me do. Whatever Fern said...happened! I loved her very much. She talked about ya'll all the time. The gardens in Heaven will be more beautiful, I hope there is Wi-Fi for her ipad and unlimited golf....Godspeed Fern.....Denise

Denise Bodie - May 17, 2015 at 06:35 AM

LF

“ Fern was my older sister. I miss her so much and feel bad we weren't able to connect more over the years. I admired her for her success that she worked so hard for. She set goals and didn't quit until she made them. She's going to leave a huge hole in the hearts of many people who knew her. I know how much my hurt is and how much more the hurt must be for her kids and grand kids. My heart goes out to all of them. Rest in peace sweet Fern. I love you.
Lynne Fuller Finnicum

Lynne Finnicum - May 16, 2015 at 07:33 AM

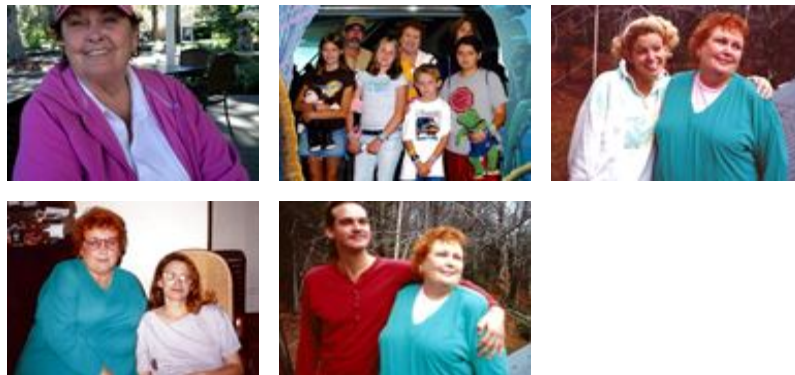
 Mark
Brown

“ I was so sorry to hear of Fern's passing. She was a special person and a gifted therapist. She was always there whenever needed. She was there for the children in my family, and she was there when I needed someone to talk to during a difficult time in my own life, even after I moved to another state. She had a talent for helping people put things into perspective, and for helping them see their better qualities. Her guidance was invaluable, and I am a better person for it. She will be missed, but her spirit will remain in the lives of every person that she encountered. My thoughts and prayers go out to the family and friends that she left behind.

Mark Brown - May 15, 2015 at 10:46 PM



“ 45 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



Hopewell Funeral Home - May 15, 2015 at 05:47 PM



“ I hope knowledge of the many lives she touched with her eternal spark of love and laughter will be of some comfort in your loss. I was one of the many blessed for knowing her.

John Marsh

John Marsh - May 14, 2015 at 04:50 PM

DH

“ Glenn and family, I am so sorry. Fern was taken all too soon. She came into my life when I needed her most 20 years ago. Not many days went by that we didn't talk about our lives, our work, our frustrations and our joys. I know that all of you were the joy in her life. She loved you all so much and bragged on each of you often. Miss Fern will be missed forever. I am a better person for having her in my life.



Donna Hunter - May 14, 2015 at 01:29 PM



Alexandra
Boyer

“ *What sad news. Fern was such an amazing person. I have so many good memories of her, knowing her for over twenty years, my entire time in Tampa. Obviously, she was a good listener, but she was also a good talker, and shared so many stories, anecdotes, and insights. She had a great sense of humor, we laughed and cried together, it was so easy to be with her. Her family meant so much to her, and this dedication was one of the strengths that she brought to her work, valuing families, in all their different make ups, needs, and configurations. Yet, she also respected the individual, and tried to help us all see how important it is to be true to ourselves at the same time. She talked a lot about life in transitions, about phases of our lives where things can be harder or easier, better or worse. As she transitioned her own life in the last year to a smaller workload, and then let her little chicks (by that I mean us!), go, it felt like she was moving on, too. I’ll always remember her crazy, curly red hair (“I’ll always be a Redhead”, she’d say), and her forest green armchair that she’d sit in. Sometimes calm, sometimes a little fired up, she was the touchpoint in my entire family’s life for a couple of decades, at one time or another. WWFD – What would Fern do, what would Fern say, she continues to be one of those quiet little voices giving guidance and unconditional acceptance. Whoever “went to see Fern”, as we would say, I knew would be in good hands. I’ll miss you so much.*

Alexandra B.

Alexandra Boyer - May 14, 2015 at 12:20 PM


D'Angelo
Bone

“ *Dr. Fern was one of the most monumental people to every be a part of my life. She is a positive spirit and as a therapist to myself and my best friend, she truly, truly knew us. She spoke motivation and wisdom into our minds and together we worked through hardships, pain and confusions that life threw toward us.*



Fern is forever immortal with her legend. The souls and lives she touched will go to touch the lives of others; her true love and passion for people is unsurpassed.

Fern, every time a shiny rainbow shines down on me, I know it is you looking as you watch over me. You were a guardian angel in the living world and you will be one for so many beyond. Thank you for your true humanitarian servitude.

D'Angelo Bone - May 14, 2015 at 11:39 AM


Holly
Oakes

“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



Holly Oakes - May 14, 2015 at 09:18 AM


Heather
Jones

I love this one. That was such a fun day. This pic really shows Mom's sense of humor and energy! I miss her so much.

Heather Jones - May 14, 2015 at 09:51 AM

“Tough day. But my mother suggested I write about my positive memories of Fern to help deal with my feelings about losing her (in this life anyway). So I wrote this.

Fern has been a part of my life for nearly 10 years. She counseled my parents through their separation and subsequent divorce. I was living in Nebraska at the time, in a pretty atrocious relationship with a man who definitely took advantage of my love for him. In early December of 2005, a friend of his sexually assaulted me. When I told him what happened, he never offered an apology, nor did he show anger towards this friend- he simply blamed me. I shouldn't have let him in our apartment, I should have fought back, I should have done a million things that were simply impossible to ask a victim to accept.

I didn't tell anyone else. I assumed that they would all think the same of me. That this was my fault. It destroyed me and I refused to acknowledge that I was in an unhealthy relationship. And two weeks after my assault, I went home to Tampa for Christmas to be with my family. My parents were together that Christmas, or at least trying to make it work so we could all be together as a family. My brother and sister came home, too. It was the first time in a long time my family was all together. I was noticeably not myself and my mother was worried. By the end of the trip, she offered to pay for me to have a phone counseling session with Fern when I returned home.

She had the best voice. It was cheery and upbeat and I could hear her smiling from miles away. I was instantly comforted by her. I just laid everything out that I was carrying on my chest, waiting to hear judgement. It never came.

She changed my life in an instant. Until she came into my world, I really didn't see the point in living. She helped me see that my relationship was toxic and that I needed to leave Nebraska for good. I moved back to Florida three months later. I couldn't wait to meet Fern in person.

I remember being so nervous and dressing up so she would think I was pretty. Such a silly thing to think. Fern walked out and immediately hugged me. She was warm and pleasantly squishy from the few extra pounds that she always seemed perfectly happy with. I felt so comforted to be in her arms. And I felt special. I'm sure she made all (or most) of her clients feel that way, but I could tell then that she would become part of my family. I wasn't just a client to her. She loved me. For all of my faults, my fears, my insecurities, she loved me. And she helped me love myself. I'll never forget the day she asked me to consider the things I actually liked about myself, since I tend to dwell on the negative. It was hard. I told her that I liked how easy it was for me to talk to new people. She told me it was called charisma. No matter how many times negative thoughts have clouded my mind, I think back to that day and owning my charisma. It's my gift. She encouraged me to share it.

There are honestly too many amazing qualities about that woman that I couldn't possibly share all of them. What I loved most about her was her perpetual ability to help me see the positive. That my life was worth something. I owe everything about who I am to her, and I'll miss her every single day.

Nikki Willson - May 14, 2015 at 02:23 AM

CK

“ *Our thoughts and prayers are with you all this day and for those days that follow. We are sorry for your loss. Bill and Carolyn Kiel*

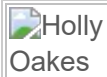
Carolyn Kiel - May 13, 2015 at 10:15 PM

ME

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Melissa - May 13, 2015 at 09:47 PM

 Holly
Oakes

Oh boy, there are pictures out there of me with that very same smile.....my mother's smile.

Holly Oakes - May 14, 2015 at 09:10 AM

DB

Holly, Fern talked about you often..always with love and pride.

Denise Bodie - May 17, 2015 at 06:21 AM



Melanie
Langston

“ For as long as I can remember Mrs Fern has been in my life. I was blessed to have Mrs Fern as my preschool teacher at the Learning Space. My mom and Mrs Fern were always the best of friends- I remember my modeling days , the many pottery days & art/craft shows. I remember watching the house across from hers burn up in a fire around Halloween (All the adults were in costumes). I remember Heather & Holly baby sitting me when the adults would go out-breaking in pointe shoes & rolling an LP down the stairs (oops). In my teens, I remember coming to Mrs Ferns because I was grounded and couldn't stay home, but those trips were always shopping in Tarpon Springs or other fun stuff. There were many camping trips to state parks, wind surfing and big bonfires!! When we got our pool- I never laughed so hard than when Mark & Fern played "Rescue Divers". I remember when she got her MSW degree from Eckerd- I thought how cool to be 50 and get your masters!! My graduation party from USF was at her house (I love that house) . My wedding, the birth of my children, etc.... I can't remember a time when Fern and the rest of the family wasn't intermixed in our world! Mrs Fern will forever live in my heart & memories!!!

Melanie Langston - May 13, 2015 at 02:08 PM