

Origami Friendship, Celebrating Wensdy Whitehead – 1971 to 2023

By Lisa B. Corfman

I started folding in 2001. My first origami convention was in 2006 in NYC. I didn't meet Wensdy there, but I met Milli McMuffin who told me about her group called Paperfolders In New England, PINE, in Needham, MA, only a 5-minute walk from work. Wensdy (a life-long origami artist), and I began folding together there.

Early on, there was a conversation. It was the subject of her name. It is important to spell it right, W-E-N-S-D-Y. Wrong spellings, and pronunciations are not good. She loved her name; Wensdy honored her parents Winnie and George. Her elementary school janitor started calling her Wednesday, later it became every other day of the week except Wednesday. Hi Thursday!!! That's Wensdy, that was who she was.

As we grew closer, she visited me. If I had cheese or ice cream nearby, I would be delighted as she would stay longer. We both loved cheese. We connected. As Wensdy would say, we were not just friends, we were "ORIGAMI FRIENDS!!!" That was a strong bond. Origami artist, Laura Kruskal was delighted by our friendship.

Trial after trial, Wensdy was my friend. In October 2011, I organized an origami festival with a month-long exhibit at the Umbrella Center for the Arts in Concord, MA. The responsibility was much more than expected. Wensdy came to the rescue and spend three weeks turning it into a positive experience. Yay, success! Wensdy also taught at the Umbrella when the origami exhibit was up to a field-trip class.

When I was living on Long Island, she and two other friends, Mei-Lin and Tamara, took the 5-hour drive and stayed with me, a 3-day Thanksgiving treat. I was so grateful.

Wensdy volunteered, exhibited, taught, and retailed at origami conventions including events in Cambridge, MA, in NYC, and more. She exhibited at the Peabody Essex Museum twice. I was privileged to curate an origami exhibition at the Charles River Museum in Waltham, MA and Wensdy was among the five of us: Wensdy, Erik and Martin DeMaine, an extraordinary floral folder and me.

We missed her on her last few years, but as Wensdy reached out to her origami friends, she wrote, "Thank you for visiting. We got a lot of important things done today." She wrote and smiled with the promise of her origami legacy, she felt loved – Wensdy knew her life would be remembered; she was ready to say "good-bye."

I say, "Thank you, Wensdy. You contributed so much. We will miss you, my friend!"