

Belchertown Lakes Association. Thanks to her commitment to the environment, valuable water and wetlands have been preserved and people can now enjoy the recreational use of the lakes.

During her illness Cheryl dedicated herself to helping others living with cancer. Some of her thoughts and feelings about coping with her disease are included in the anthology *WORDS TO LIVE BY*, which is filled with writings from members of the Spirit of the Written Word Workshop. Her dedication to family and friends, her love of literature and art, her wisdom and her great sense of humor will be deeply missed by all who knew her.

Cheryl is survived by many relatives and many close friends. She also leaves her beloved Yorkshire terriers, Ginny and Mighty Mouse.

Contributions in Cheryl's memory may be made to the Cancer Connection, 269 Locust St, Florence, MA 01062; or to the Dakin Animal Shelter, 162 Montague Rd, Leverett, MA 01054.

BRENDA HENSON: age 62, died peacefully on February 8 at her home in Dumas, Arkansas, in the grateful arms of her wife, Wanda Henson, and surrounded by family and longtime friends. Empowered by her belief in positive thinking, Brenda had survived recurrent colon cancer for four years, and she never stopped hoping for a cure.

Brenda was born September 25, 1945, in Lebanon, OH, and she grew up in Loveland, OH. Despite dropping out of school in the ninth grade, she managed to earn a master's degree from the University of Southern Mississippi in 1992, and then an education specialist degree (Ed.S.), with an emphasis on teaching displaced homemakers.

In 1987 she and Wanda co-founded the Southern Wild Sisters Bookstore, a feminist resource center in Gulfport, MS. Then in 1989 they created the nonprofit charity, Sister Spirit, Inc, and they opened Camp Sister Spirit, a feminist retreat center in Ovett, MS. After members of the local, primarily Christian community tried to run them out of town, Brenda appeared on "Oprah" and other talk shows to defend her group's right to own property as Lesbians.

Over the years she was a guest lecturer at 55 universities, speaking on the topic: "From the Frontlines – Homophobia in the U.S. Today: a First Person Accounting." In 2001, university students in Northern Ireland hosted Brenda and Wanda for a two-week fact-finding and speaking tour there.

During her lifetime Brenda received numerous awards of recognition. In 1994 she was named Uncommon Woman of the Year, and in 1995 she was chosen Entrepreneur of the Year by *Victory! Magazine*. She also received a commendation for bravery from the U.S. House of Representatives.

In 2004 Brenda and Wanda went to Massachusetts to consecrate in holy matrimony their 20-year committed relationship. Brenda never achieved her life's dream, to live in peace until her demise, but until the end she tried to enjoy happiness and love every minute with her devoted wife.

Brenda is survived by her wife Wanda Reeves Henson, four children, several grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and other family members. She was beloved by all who knew her.

Memorials may be sent to SisterSpirit, Inc/Camp Sister Spirit, PO Box 12, Ovett, MS 39464; to Rainbow Law, RR 1, Box 266C, Wallace, WV 26448; or to a social justice organization of one's choice. Brenda's family wants to encourage everyone to help prevent colon cancer by getting a colonoscopy by age 50.



Brenda (right) with Wanda Henson