



## Autumn Lorraine Mather

October 3, 1975 - April 1, 2026

From a young age, Autumn Mather was bright, curious, and kind. She spent her early years living in the Tidewater area of Virginia before the family moved to Woodstock, Illinois. After high school, she followed her passions for literature, art, and libraries - attending Sweet Briar College for a Bachelors in English and Art History, University of Chicago for a Masters in Liberal Arts, and Dominican University for a Masters in Library Science.

For more than 20 years, Autumn was a full-time librarian - a vocation she truly loved. Being a librarian fed her excitement for discovery and her joy for helping others answer important questions. Her dedication made her an invaluable part of the Chicago library community through her work at a variety of institutions including Newberry Library and Loyola University. She loved to say that “libraries should reward curiosity” and anyone who had a chance to work with Autumn knew their curiosity would be welcomed with patience and kindness.

In 2000, while attending the University of Chicago, Autumn met Mike Cardinale, a fellow classmate who matched her enthusiasm for life, learning, and Shakespeare. Three years later, they were married, creating a life together that they filled with art, books, music, theater, delicious food and drink, travel, baseball, dogs, horse racing, soccer, and amazing friendships. Mike was Autumn’s best friend and she was by his side until he passed in

2019.

Autumn understood the fragility of life and was determined to savor each day, always planning her next adventure. You might find her at Chicago Shakespeare Theater in an enviably stylish outfit or criss-crossing the city to visit bookstores on Chicago's annual Independent Bookstore Day. She and Mike traveled all across the United States and Europe and made a yearly pilgrimage to the Kentucky Derby. In just the three years before she passed, she traveled to Washington, California, New York, New Mexico, Nova Scotia, France, and Greece. Two of her favorite trips were with her niece and nephew to celebrate their 10th birthdays - Norah chose New York City and Nico chose Hollywood.

Autumn not only filled her life with her passions but also shared them with others. Countless people can say they found a new favorite author, learned about an unfamiliar artist, or heard a bit of history about their neighborhood because of Autumn. She invited people to join her for theater and opera performances. She diligently explained the complexities of Shakespeare to those who were less well-versed.

She was an exceptional friend who remembered the smallest details of conversations, wrote the loveliest cards for every occasion, and always found time for those who needed it. She was a faithful companion for evening dog walks, a confidante with a cup of tea always waiting, and someone to turn to for kindness, comfort, gleeful wit, and unbridled joy at simply seeing your face.

While Autumn loved many things, perhaps what she loved most of all were her dogs - Night, Nero, Flavia, and Brodie. They were steadfast companions, each with their own delightfully unique personalities. As Autumn would often recount, they were occasionally guilty of "crimes" involving the theft of a kitchen item or desecrating a trash bin. But, they were always swiftly forgiven.

And like any good dog, each of them adored the love and affection of their doting owner.

Autumn is survived by her parents Jim and Gay Mather; her sister Mavis Mather and brother-in-law John Collins; her sister Allegra Mather; nieces and nephews Norah and Nico Reading and Chase and Christian Harding; and her beloved dog Mr. Jackson Brodie. Her smiles and laughter will be greatly missed by her family and countless friends who loved her.

To honor Autumn, her family asks that you support one of the causes close to her heart: Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Chicago Chess Foundation, Greater Chicago Food Depository, or any pet rescue organization.