

Appendix 1 Tributes to Gerry

“It was with a very heavy heart that I received the sad news of Gerry’s death. I feel really privileged to have known her albeit for a short time on her beautiful island home. Gerry had an irrepressible personality with an infectious laugh. The sparkle in her eyes said it all for she really was the life and soul of the party! She never suffered fools gladly and was the champion of the underdog. I well remember my altercation with our Greek neighbours on the island and way she dealt with the situation in her own indefatigable way!

I really count myself blessed for having known Gerry - I am only sad that it was for such a short time. She touched so many lives and will be missed by everyone who knew her. As you have said Gerry fought all of the way through nine long years and now lies at peace on her beautiful island. You will miss her more than words can describe but I feel sure she will remain with you in spirit for the rest of your life. Her bravery and courage is an inspiration to us all as is your fortitude and the caring way you cared for and looked after Gerry. My thoughts and best wishes are with you as you learn to live life without your darling Gerry.”

JEFF

“The world has lost an amazing woman but how lucky was I to call her my friend. I will carry her spirit within me always - dearest Gerry”

JAN

“You have lost such a wonderful, brave, wife and friend. I am so sorry and wish I had words that could bring comfort to you. We share your pain and hope you find comfort from your wonderful memories. I will always remember sweet, brave Gerry and wish I had known her more. Bon courage, dear Dave. ”

DAVE

“We were so sorry to hear the news about Gerry. She was a lovely lady. She put up a good fight for a long time. Do keep in touch - there’s always a bed here for you if you fancy a break. Just give us a phone. ”

SUE & DAVE

“A very sad time, the days ahead will be dark and difficult I know (I have been there) but you will get through with the love and support of all your friends, not only on Alonissos, but the world over. Gerry was a special person, your soul mate.”

SANDRA and HARRY

“My very sincere condolences Dave”

CHRIS

"Our love and thoughts are with you. Having watched Gerry from a baby we are truly sad she suffered not anymore."

JOYCE

"I hope you are keeping OK. I was so sorry to hear about Gerry but I hope you can have a good Christmas and a good New Year. If at any time you feel you'd like to come over you know you are always more than welcome. All my love and best wishes."

MAUREEN

"I have written this letter in my head so many times, please forgive me for not sending it earlier. I first met Gerry when she was about 11 years old. Always a loving and caring girl. She was my bridesmaid together with my late sister. When Laurence died Gerry was the one that kept me in touch with the Ivison's - she came to Allan and my wedding as did Alice and Fred - a lovely family. She also visited me when we lived in Vigo village.

She was so privileged to meet you - you seemed to bring out the best in each other. What a pity it had to end the way it did. But my memory of Gerry was a vibrant happy one - one which I will always remember. Hope you are not finding life too difficult at the moment - you are probably a great deal warmer than we are - it is 0 degrees at the moment. If you are ever in our area it would be lovely to meet up with you again. There is always a bed for you here. We are both thinking of you."

MYRA and ALLAN

"So sorry to hear about Gerry. She battled against the disease and was brave to the end. May she rest in peace and may you find solace."

MEG and MEL

"We are truly sorry for your loss. Gerry was such a lovely person and we both hold very fond memories of her. We will really miss her."

MORWENNA, KELI, GRACE and ALBIE

"I can't put into words to tell how sorry we all are. The first time I met Gerry was when you came to see us when you were both doing Open University, the first words were "look David proper good". I knew then she was part of the family. I'm pleased you had your 'angels of mercy' and would like them to know that we who are far away really appreciate their care."

ALMA

"Remembering you in prayer at this very sad time. Love and prayers"

RALPH and KIM

“Sorry to hear of your sad loss - she will be very much missed. I hope you are alright and look forward to maybe seeing you next year should we manage to visit the island”.

GIFFORD

“I just wanted to write and say how sorry I am to hear of Gerry’s death. What a beautiful and courageous lady! You will all miss her so much. I know you will be surrounded by the love of all your friends on Alonissos, but we are thinking of you and send love and healing wishes to you.”

JOAN

“We were so sorry to hear the sad news about Gerry. We have happy memories of the weekend we all spent in Biggleswade, when the Norton’s and Lancashire’s invaded your tiny cottage. Thinking of you at this sad time.”

KATHRYN and KEVIN

“I have just opened up the Ivicourt blog and see you are away at the moment. I was very sorry not to be there at the end but it did my heart good to know Gerry was with you for your anniversary and her birthday. What an amazing lady. I wish I had got to know her better. I felt very humbled by her friendliness and kindness towards me. She was so gracious and thankful when I came to help Lyn and Lizzie. You too.

She was very open about how she felt and was incredibly brave. It is such a cruel disease and she was such a brave warrior. Her deepest sadness and concern was leaving you. Such love and you have for her. So precious. I can only imagine how difficult and painful life is at the moment. You are in our thoughts and prayers very frequently, even though I’ve not been in touch. We hope your trip away gives you some space and blessing.”

GEOFF and MARION

“My partner Diane and I joined you and Gerry on our September holiday last year, at a dancing lesson with Yiorgos and then for a drink afterwards. We also met you waiting for a ferry off the island. I have checked in on the website from time to time since; just to say I am sorry to hear of Gerry's passing. You were both very hospitable to us, and we appreciated that. If you are ever in northern England on a holiday, you are welcome to look us up in York.”

Paul and Diane

“Please accept our heartfelt condolences. We are both really saddened to hear of Gerry’s passing and our thoughts are with you at this sad time.”

DAVID and JEMMA

“It is with great sadness that we learned of Gerry's passing. We are so sorry. I wrote you both on 29 September without checking your website, unaware that Gerry had already passed. That was terribly thoughtless of me, for which I offer you my sincerest apology. How are you? You and Gerry have been together for a very long time, and we can only begin to imagine how you must feel. We have been fond of you and Gerry since we met on our first trip to Alonissos. We remember, we were in the Old Village, and you were walking slowly with Gerry. Had that not been the case, Tamara might not have addressed you both and started the conversation that has led us to our decision to move to Alonissos and to take the steps to do it. We owe you both for sparking our imagination and helping us to believe that all things are possible.

“We read on your website that many people paid Gerry their last respects. It shows how well people loved and thought well of her. She was a very lovely person. What can we do concretely? Would she have liked that we donate to a charity? I read that Gerry loved books. Is there some way in cash or kind that we can contribute something? We also learned that Gerry was a terrific fundraiser for various organizations on the island. Would she have liked that we give to one of them? I read that you will be off island until October 12, depending on the ferry schedule. I have to depart Alonissos in October 16. I do hope we are able to get together in the time in between. With our deepest sympathy.”

DAVID and TAMARA

“We have never met, but over the many years we have been holidaying in Alonissos we have regularly dipped into your website, especially on dark and dismal winter days, to remind ourselves of the joys of the island. Thus, in a small and slightly weird electronic way, we feel we "know" you. We have been reading your recent updates concerning Gerry with much sadness. An email is hardly the most fitting way to express one's condolences but I hope you'll accept them in the spirit that they are forwarded to you.”

KATE and RICHARD

“We barely know you - though avid readers of your blog - but as part-time residents of Alonissos for forty years, now in Megali Ammos, we are very aware and appreciative of what you do to publicise the island and its goings on to a wider audience. And occasionally you and I meet outside Papou, or somewhere, for a chat. Nevertheless we are very saddened to hear about the death of Gerry and to think of its impact on you. We are both thinking of you.”

GRAEME and RENA

“Charlotte and I, and we're sure all other absent friends from all over the globe; wish to express our deepest sympathies and condolences following the incredibly sad passing away of Gerry. In what is traditionally an occasion of mourning and sadness, we are absolutely sure that it should also be an occasion of celebration - a celebration of the wonderfully unique contribution that Gerry has made to all of our lives. When we say unique, we mean it! Gerry has made an indelible mark on all our lives. Her strength in adversity, her resilience, her sense of humour, her boundless enthusiasm, her bluntness (oh yes, she always told it straight!!) are all seared in to our hearts and consciences. We are all indebted to Gerry because she has taught us all a most important lesson. Whatever happens to us, we should never give in and we should fight back with every ounce of spirit that we can muster. For the past nine years she has battled one of the most awful diseases imaginable but it has never got her down. Her battle has been a truly remarkable one, defying every medical prediction. Medical science has made enormous progress over the past fifty years in its treatment of cancer and is now having to come to terms with a hitherto unknown reaction to that (to quote Dave) 'bitch' of a disease. This reaction is currently attracting the terminology- 'Gerryism' - and is baffling experts everywhere. 'Gerryism' puts up two fingers to all normal responses to the disease and says 'I'm going nowhere until I've had my wedding anniversary and my birthday so stuff you!'.

Charlotte and I (and we are certain many, many others) owe Gerry a huge debt of gratitude. Many times we have arrived on the island with our perceived worries related to work and/or relationships, or the stresses of airport experiences or even the traumatic 'Hellenic' timetables that we all know and love. We arrive thinking we are hard done by. And then we've met Gerry who greets you with optimism, cheerfulness and a totally 'half full ' approach to everything and suddenly all are put into perspective. You then realise how damn lucky you are and consequently you have a happier time on the island. Thank you, Gerry.

None of us should forget the outstanding contribution that Gerry and Dave have made to the island. They are both respected and loved by residents and non-residents, from Greece, the UK, America, Germany, Italy and indeed all over the world. Gerry has been a tireless fund raiser for the island helping to improve the medical facilities, the opportunities for young people and the animals of the island. She is a great example to us all and we hope that we can recognise her community spirit by ensuring that future fund raising is committed to further improvement of medical services.

It would be remiss of us also not to remember the remarkable work done by the 'Angels of Mercy' over the past few weeks. I'm sure that we all need to reflect on how we can all contribute to ensuring that such support is available to everyone who needs it in future years. We are very sorry that we are not there with you

today, as indeed many others will be too. We sincerely hope that there is a fantastic celebration of a wonderful life. We'll raise a glass to Gerry and thank her deeply for the difference she has made to our lives.

JOHN and CHARLOTTE

"We visit Alonissos every summer and read your "breaking news" page on Ivicourt most days - it keeps us in touch with the island we love and helps keep our holiday memories alive. Despite never having met either of you we feel as if we know you, having smiled at the good times and been saddened by your various tribulations. We have followed Gerry treatment over the last year or so and have been so impressed with her spirit and fight, and by your devotion to her. We were so sorry to read of Gerry's death yesterday, having made it to your wedding anniversary and her birthday. Please accept the condolences and best wishes of two people you have never met, but whose lives you have touched."

JUDITH and ANDREW

"Dave, I am so sorry for Gerry's passing. Both of you were always so warm and gracious to Jeff and I when we visited the island. May she now soar free at last....graciously watching over you ❤️ Big hugs Dave. You are in my thoughts."

SUZANNE and JEFF

"Colin and I wanted to let you know how very; very sorry we are to hear the sad news. Gerry was a beautiful person who was loved by everyone who knew her. Her courage and determination fighting this terrible disease, which seems to affect us all, was commendable. She will be greatly missed on the island and we are comforted to know that you will be supported by all the wonderful friends you have."

DELIA and COLIN

"I just heard the news about Jerry and I wanted to say how very sorry I am. She was an amazing funny lady and I felt privileged to know her. I like to think of her up there now having a laugh with Nick. Hope you are doing okay."

MICHAELA

"We still follow the events on the island from your news page and so we have been up-to-date with Gerry's long struggle. We just want to send our love and that our thoughts are with you at this time. Gerry was a very brave and determined and together with your support bore her illness with great dignity and fortitude. The strength she must have needed to bear it all for nine years was remarkable."

CLIVE and DIANE

“My condolences are sent from Crete, and with, very, cloudy eyes. It's been heart-breaking following your times together these years and feeling the deep and true affection you shared with each other, and always will share together.

After my own loss 12/12/12 there was an odd feeling of something like euphoria, must have been the fear no longer relevant. After 12 days the grief came, suddenly and heavily, and for three months I more or less just stayed in bed, only wanting to read, and listen to music. Walk our walks when I was up to it, nothing else. He was, my everything. A specific book helped me a very good deal during those times, explaining things I thought about, and providing considerable amount of consolation: Life After Death, by Deepak Chopra, it's on Amazon ... the title is more poetic in Danish translation: Eternal Life.

I felt he was around me night and day. Loving as always, looking after me. But a younger version, like when he was in his prime. And about that I found answers in that book too. As I knew he was there I burned the candles in the red plastic every night, all night, outside, and when that wasn't possible smaller ones in front of a photo in my bedroom - for three years (!), and then suddenly the time to move on was there with me. I wish you an easy transition in to a new and different future and hope you will find new spiritual and caring pleasures somewhere in whatever nature they may present themselves, when your time is ripe. What a bliss true love can be! And what a powerful strength for you to carry with you in your future ...”

ANNA

“Dear Dave our hearts go out to you. Gerry couldn't have had better loving care anywhere else. For that you must find comfort. You must be exhausted you poor dear. May she rest in peace in God loving care.”

JAMES and VICTORIA

“So very sorry to read of the loss of your wife Gerry. We have noted with genuine interest all that she has gone through this last year (as well as yourself) and now her tired soul is at rest. Look after yourself.”

DENISE and JACK

“Jan told me this morning of your sad news, I am so sorry to hear Gerry passed away this morning. She certainly gave her all to stay with you for as a long as possible and you looked after her so well. You were both so brave. You will miss her terribly but she will always be in your heart, thoughts and with many happy memories. I am sorry I am not on the island to attend her funeral and be there for you but I know there will be an enormous amount of people who loved Gerry and will be there to support you.”

VAL

"I am so, so sorry to hear the news of Gerry's passing. She was a brave, witty, funny, gracious, loving, force of nature who touched the lives of so many of us who were lucky enough to know her and all the animals who called her mum. She fought the cancer with such vigorous tenacity and with such a wonderful sense of humour and gracious spirit that I truly believe that her real victory was not in surviving as long as she has, but that at no stage did she let it diminish her spirit or her lust for life.

She found in you a perfect partner, someone with a sister soul to her's. You were always so happy together and I can remember thinking on many occasions that yours is the love that I want to aspire towards. Easy like breathing and resolutely solid. I know that the island will look after you as you have so long done for it, but I wanted you to know how much I admire you both and to let you know how loved you are my friend, even from across the sea."

KEIRAN

"You don't know me but I'm a friend of Tony Larcombe's. I've been following your wonderful site for some time and following Gerry's battle and your support of her. There's little one can say but I venture the following: May your grief be short and your memories be sweet."

JUDITH

"I was so sorry to read that Gerry had died but how lovely that you managed, with the help of wonderful friends, to look after her at home. I am sure you have an amazing collection of happy memories which, in time, will help you. I hope you will continue to enjoy the lifestyle that you both chose and loved on Alonnisos."

CAROLINE & JAMES

"We are very saddened to read the news about Gerry on your website this morning. We remember her as a strong lady with a ready smile. For us Gerry very much represented the essence of Alonnisos. Always kind and helpful and often with a glass of Ouzo in hand at social gatherings. We know that she will be sorely missed on the island and of course by you for whom now and during the last few weeks it has been a most difficult and sorrowful time."

JANE and BRIAN

"We are sad to learn that Gerry joined the angels this morning. Wish we could be there tomorrow for the celebration of a wonderful life. Our hearts and thoughts will be on Alonnisos with you and your friends and family."

TERESA and STEVE

“We are so very sorry for your lost. Of course we will show our respect at the funeral today.”

TJITSKE and JACQUELINE

“Hi Dave, Netty told me the bad news early this morning. I'm so sorry and so sad... Gerry left, she stays in my heart such as I knew her, full of spirit, like champagne and generous, I shall never forget her. All my thoughts go to you.”

ELISABETH (BABETTE)

“I have just read the very sad news about Gerry's death. I am so sorry for your loss. She was so heroic and battled on through her long illness and painful treatments. She will be missed by her many friends and particularly by those who fought to make her last days as comfortable as possible. My thoughts will be with you at her funeral. May she rest in peace. Sleep tight Gerry. Peace at last.”

ANGIE

“It is with great sadness to read this morning of Gerry's passing. Please accept our condolences. We are Jenny & Alan, John Goodwin's sister and brother-in law. Although we only met a couple of times several years ago, through following your website daily, we feel that we have known you both for years. We met Lyn for the first time and Netty, who we have not seen for nearly 20 years, in Taverna Panselinos one night in June. You have many friends on the island; they will help you through this sad time. Our thoughts are with you Dave. God bless Gerry.”

JENNY & ALAN

“This day was inevitable and of course it's sadbut Wow Gerry! What a fight! The Girl was determined to pass the milestone of another anniversary of your happy marriage and another year of her life on this earth! She has now gone but never to be forgotten by so many who have had you both in our thoughts throughout these last days. Wonderful that you were still side by side in your happy home right to the very end. We are all here for you Dave. God bless.”

JULIE & NIGEL

“So very sorry to read about Gerry I've been following the website & praying for you both. She was a very courageous lady fighting this awful disease for so long. I met you briefly in the Medical Centre in June when my husband had fluid in the lung & we had to go to Volos Hospital. He is still undergoing tests but thoughts are that it is mild Melanoma in the lung as diagnosed in Greece. We were very impressed by the Centre on Alonissos & the young doctor. Our thoughts & prayers are with you at this very sad time.”

VAL

“Janet rang me this morning and told me the sad news about Gerry. The news hit rather hard as, although we didn’t meet often, I thought Gerry was a wonderful Lady. I have let my side of the family know and our thoughts and sympathies are with you. I’m afraid none of us will be able to come to the funeral tomorrow but hope it is a fitting celebration of her life. My thoughts are with you.”

BOB COLES

“We were so sorry to hear the sad news of Gerry's passing. Just wanted to pass on our deepest sympathy and to let you know that our thoughts are with you.”

DON & TRISH

“From all of us (Colin in the Netherlands included) our deepest condolences with the loss of your beloved wife and soulmate. We followed your messages everyday on your website and we also want to give our deepest respect for the team of ‘mercy angels’ which helped Gerry and you through this difficult time. It might be a consolation that Gerry passed away in her own bed amongst all the people she loved. Lots of strength in these difficult times.”

MARIANNE, COLIN & WIL

“Just read your message on Ivicourt and Jan and I are sending you our love at this difficult time for you. Gerry will be missed by many people who have had the pleasure to know her. With our love to you.”

BARBARA and JAN

“Just read your sad news on the website. RIP Gerry. She was one of a kind and the island will not seem the same without her. So sorry not to be there for her funeral and the celebration of her life, but we will raise a glass in her memory. We send our love and thoughts.”

KYLA & CHRIS

“So sorry to hear that Gerry died this morning, but not surprised. You were right that she waited till after her birthday. That’s typical of Gerry. Sending all our love and thoughts to you. It was an honour and privilege to have known Gerry and had so much fun with her. RIP Gerry.”

JANE

“We have just picked up your sad, sad news and our thoughts are with you. We will always have so many wonderful memories of Gerry. To use your words 'The curse of 2017 continues'. I know it is no comfort but at least Gerry is at peace. We will raise a glass to Gerry this evening. She was a lovely, lovely lady. Thinking of you at this difficult time.”

VAS and LINDA

"We are thinking of you Dave. So sorry to hear the sad news this morning. Gerry will be remembered for her courage, a very brave lady. Our sympathy is with you & your family & friends. God bless you all."

MIKE & TRISH

"May I offer you my heartfelt condolences at this sad time of losing Gerry but she will definitely not be forgotten and like my Eileen battled to the end. I will let Bob and the family know. Love hugs and blessed comfort."

JAN

"We are in France and just got the news about Gerry. So, so sorry - she fought so hard over the years and how brave to hang in there for your wedding anniversary and her 67th birthday yesterday. Please know we are thinking of you at this difficult time whilst remembering her life and the wonderful times we had together."

ALAN and PAT

"We were so devastated to hear of Gerry's death last night, but so glad that she is finally at peace. It seems like only yesterday that we went through the same when Ziggy died last Feb after nearly a week in the hospice. Even though I knew she was going to die, the shock when she actually died was beyond agony. Gerry was a wonderful sweet, kind person who will be so desperately missed by us all, but none more than you, Dave. I feel so very privileged that I was able to spend a few hours with you last night, hearing all about your wonderful life with Gerry, your beloved soul mate. Our heartfelt thoughts and love are with you at this time and please know that we will be happy to do anything at all that may help. Sadly, we can't take away your pain and grief, but if there is anything practical we can do, please let us know. We will be with you tomorrow at the funeral. Thinking of you lots."

ROSIE & PETER

"I am sure that you will be inundated by messages from well-wishers but I just wanted to get in touch to say how sad I was to read this morning about Gerry's death. I know that we all knew that it was coming but it doesn't stop me feeling any less sad or sorry for you and for your very brave wife who kept fighting right up to the end. She really was an inspiration the way that she kept positive and cheerful despite everything that happened and even in those last few weeks when she was so poorly. You have been such a kind and caring husband to her - I am just amazed at how strong you have been. I know that it's going to be the next weeks and months that will be really hard for you and just want you to take care of yourself a bit now. I am sorry that I won't be able to be at the funeral tomorrow but my thoughts and best wishes will be with you. I will be back in December but if there's anything you need or you just want to talk then do get in touch."

CHARLOTTE

“Inevitable as it was we are feeling very sad to hear your news this morning. Our thoughts are with you and we send our love. Sorry we can't be at the funeral tomorrow but will be there in spirit. You will, we know, have lots of friends there to support you as Gerry was very much loved.”

ANNE and IAN

“So sorry to hear the news that Gerry has passed away. My love and prayers are with you my dear friend.”

PADDY