



# Karen Olivia Strong

MAY 25, 1945 - OCT 20, 2025



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# **Karen Olivia Strong**

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**K**aren Olivia Strong, 80, passed away peacefully at home on 20 October 2025 after a brief struggle with cancer. Her loving husband, Jay, was beside her, holding her hand, and reading to her from the Gospel of John.

Karen was born on 25 May 1945 in Danville, Virginia. Growing up as a “Navy Brat,” she lived in California, Arizona, Virginia (with her grandmother), and Maryland. Karen’s father was a Pearl Harbor survivor who continued to serve in the Navy. When he retired, the family settled down in a modest home on a dead-end street near the Patuxent River Naval Base in Lexington Park, Maryland. (Karen lamented having to live there during her high school years.)

Within days of graduating from Great Mills High School (coincidentally the same small high school as her daughter-in-law), Karen was on a Greyhound to Washington, D.C. to work for the FBI. She had many intriguing stories of her time there, including the assassination of JFK. To the dismay, and suspicion, of the FBI she moved on to work at the Embassy of Iran until the day an Iranian Colonel chased her around a desk with amorous intent.

Deciding she needed a change, Karen moved to Baltimore, rented a room, and went to work for a prominent law firm. She continued her career as a legal secretary / legal assistant for some 30 years. Karen’s warp speed typing skills served her well. When transitioning to word processing on desktop computers in the 80’s the monitors could not keep up. Those skills came in very handy for her son Tony, who gladly accepted her offer to type all his school papers. Karen retired from the legal work in 1994 and became the accounting department for a small process serving company – she did payroll, accounts payable and receivable, IRS and state tax forms, all of it.

It was also important to Karen to support her husband, Jay, in his dedication to the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks. Despite being denied membership to the Towson Lodge in 2003, she continued to volunteer because she wanted to help people. Almost a decade later and after retiring and moving to Lewes, DE in 2012, Karen was personally recommended by a Past Grand Exalted Ruler (i.e., Past National President) for membership in the Cape Henlopen Elks Lodge



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2540, which gladly welcomed her. The high point of her Elk career was the year she was First Lady of the Maryland, Delaware District of Columbia Elks Association, a role she energetically fulfilled with aplomb.

Karen was creative and had many hobbies over the years. She was a self-taught seamstress – even making her own professional workwear, back when everyone had to dress for work. Karen also excelled in needle point, knitting and cross stitch. More recently, she enjoyed painting festive looking bird houses freehand. In retirement, Karen and Jay especially enjoyed traveling, live entertainment of all kinds (she was an enthusiastic appreciator of the entertainers’ talent), and dancing (she was a great dancer).

Karen had a rare gift for being able to easily and instantly connect with new people - anyone from any walk of life - and engage them in thoughtful and pleasant conversation. She would then turn to her bashful husband and say, “See how easy that is?” No one she met was a stranger to her, yet she always thought of herself as shy. Karen was cheerful wherever she went, and generous. If she (or her husband) had been rich, she would have been a thoughtful and empathetic philanthropist.

When Karen loved, she loved deeply and more than anything, she loved her family. She had a very special bond with her son Tony; he was the apple of her eye and never stopped calling him “Pumpkin”. Karen was thrilled to have the opportunity to be home with her twin grandchildren during the week beginning when they were infants and through the toddler years – she always cherished this time and had many great stories. The open secret to the unbreakable bond she and her loving husband had was this: they promised to be constantly “Pleasing each other.” They were devoted to each other, never faltering, right up to the very last moments. Karen will be sorely missed.

Karen was preceded in death by her brother William “Bill” Howard Mann, Jr., and her grandson Luke Christopher Cimino (who will forever be 17 years old). She is survived by her husband, Jay V. Strong, Jr., her son, Anthony Joseph Cimino, her daughter-in-law Jennifer Shook Cimino, her twin grandchildren, Jacob “Jake” Anthony Cimino and Callie Elizabeth Cimino, her two stepsons, Jay V. Strong, III and Bryan S. Strong, and her niece, Lisa Mae Mann.

A celebration of life will be held at the Ruck Funeral Home, 1050 York Road, Towson, Maryland 21204 on Saturday, 15 November 2025 with receiving of friends at 1:00 pm, and Memorial Service at 3:00 pm.



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A Memorial and Elk Funeral Service (the public is welcomed) will be held at the Cape Henlopen Lodge 2540, 18544 Beaver Dan Road, Lewes, Delaware 19958 on Sunday, 23 November 2025 at 11:00 am.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Wounded Warriors Project at <https://support.woundedwarriorproject.org/> or Tunnel to Towers at <https://t2t.org/>, Karen's two favorite charities.

Please sign Karen's tribute wall at this site.

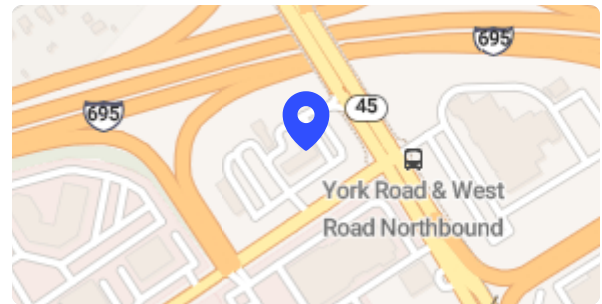


# Events

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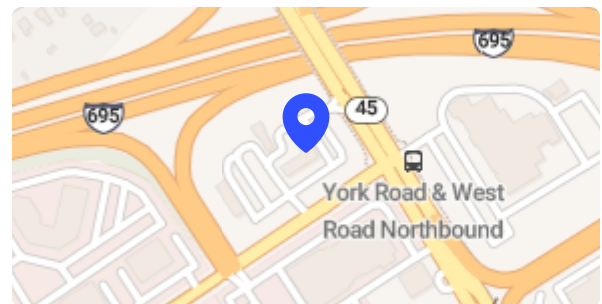
## Celebration of life

- Saturday**, November 15, 2025
- 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM ET
- Ruck Funeral Home**  
1050 York Road, Towson MD 21024



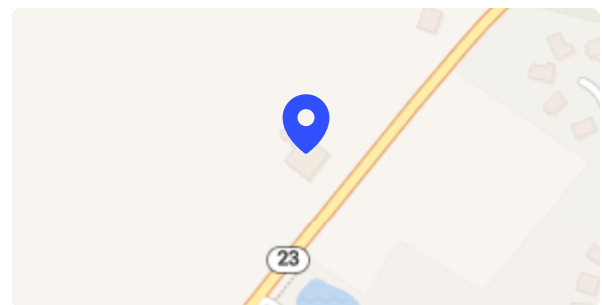
## Memorial Service

- Saturday**, November 15, 2025
- 3:00 PM ET
- Ruck Funeral Home**  
1050 York Road, Towson MD 21024



## Memorial Service

- Sunday**, November 23, 2025
- 11:00 AM ET
- Cape Henlopen Lodge**  
18544 Beaver Dan Road, Lewes DE 19958





# Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Karen by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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